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*A New Portrait of Methodism,
Leeds, 1815.*

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A NEW
PORTRAIT
OF
METHODISM;

BEING A CIRCUMSTANTIAL ACCOUNT OF THE DISPUTE
BETWEEN THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, AND THE
TRUSTEES OF MILLBOURN PLACE CHAPEL
AT NORTH SHIELDS.

With a Dedication to
THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Bifrons, custos, bos, fur, sus atque sacerdos.

LILLY.

Whate'ermen speak by this new light,
Still they are sure to be r'th right ; -
'Tis a dark lanthorn of the spirit,
Which none see but those that bear it,

BUTLER.

LEEDS:

PRINTED FOR, AND SOLD *J. Heaton*
SOLD BY BALDWIN, CRADDOCK AND JOY, LONDON;
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS OF
LEEDS, WAKEFIELD, BRADFORD, HALIFAX,
&c. &c.

1815.

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B. Dewhirst Printer, 21. Boar Lane, Leeds.

Wes. 1550

DEDICATION

TO THE

METHODIST CONFERENCE.

Reverend Fathers,

THE following papers having come into my hands, I cannot withhold from the public the very singular instruction which I have myself received from the perusal of them. Permit me therefore to lay the progeny at the feet of the august and venerable Parent. Amidst the swarming productions of the press, I feel confident, that for originality and importance, this will not easily find a parallel. I am aware that the holy records of Methodism might readily supply many narratives of a similiar description from the memorials of that momentous period, when the bowels of the shepherds yearned to lord it over the sheepfold as well as the flock, and when refractory and faithless brethren opposed this very equitable demand. This part of the province of the historian has not however, to my knowledge, been yet adequately discharged. Being therefore possessed of the compact and faithful account of one engagement, what I have freely received I freely give as what I presume to be a tolerably correct example of all. Under your potent patronage, this will, I hope, circulate through your societies, and be found serviceable to future biographers, enabling them to supply a few important features in the portraits of your founder, and some of his compeers, omitted

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by former ones. You are well aware that for our co-operation in this design, we have the highest authority, namely that of Scripture. Sacred history, above all others, is instant in season and out of season to render itself complete, to display in its illustrious characters the shades as well as the lights, no doubt judging that, by the contrast, the latter would shine with redoubled lustre. The ardent disciple of Methodism here contemplating, for a short time, the father of his faith, putting his candle under a bushel, will, when he beholds it brought forth again and exhibited to be seen of men, more abundantly marvel at its pre-eminent blaze. Sagacious indeed was the dexterity with which the two houses at North Shields were "*rubbed together!*" Admirable the sublime course that was run without any restraint from a "*silly sense of honour!*" Carnal minds might have stumbled amidst the perilous and rugged maze, the spiritual one wins its way unannoyed by the moral asperities of a vain and vexatious world. Carnal minds at the picture here presented of the minister of the gospel, the salt of the earth, may be tempted to say with the poet,

" Ah ! how unlike your meek forgiving Master,
He Gilead's Balm, but you a blister plaster ;"

the spiritual one knows how to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, knows that all things are possible to him that believeth.

Many of your elders can, no doubt, recount with honest pride, how you covered yourselves with glory in the field of battle, and beat down the strong holds of Satan twenty years ago ; when you contended with the Trustees of London, Birstall, Dewsbury, and elsewhere ; even the poor

drivelling, hated, Samaritans of the present day, who are damned with poverty in this world, and for schism in the next: the new Methodists at Huddersfield and Brighouse can bear witness to your power, as well as your readiness to use it. This testimony will prove that you are as valiant as your fathers were, who, though dead, yet live and speak in you.

But while I am writing, I am greatly rejoiced in the Spirit on being informed of the well-timed applications which have been made last week, by a number of letters written to eight or ten of the best or leading preachers among the Kilhamites, assembled in Conference at Leeds, exhorting them to leave their miserable and deluded followers, to come into the old ship, giving them hopes, and even promises, of a much better livelihood, in the fellowship of the old brethren; the old stock, who have riches and honours, ease and pleasure, both here and hereafter. I am delighted with the idea, as well as astonished at the depths, of your knowledge of the human heart; you are well informed of the usual motives of mens' actions: you think with Walpole, that every man has his price; you judge of these men by yourselves. While the simpletons were assembled, with empty bellies, empty purses and long faces, looking over and bemoaning their poverty-struck books and accounts, every fund troubled with a deficit, every account short of money, and the prospect for next year worse than the last; nothing could come more opportunely than your well-timed prayers and exhortations to them to change sides; Machiavel himself could not have exceeded this, and they must be cursed with more than judicial blindness and obstinacy

not to give ear to you ; you must succeed, ply them closely, set your own ease and comfort before them, tell them of the millionworth of property ; *freehold property, nay better, clear of all taxes and repairs.* which your Conference (the hundred) is possessed of, and my word for it you will succeed ; if they should refuse you they are not worthy of you, but seldom a body of Parsons was found that could refuse such tempting offers ; this point obtained, ten of their best preachers brought over to you, the remainder will sink into contempt of course, they cannot hold together six months, and their deluded flock, why, leave them to the damnation of Dr. Coke for their obstinacy and rebellion.

Previous to the birth of Methodism, the theological complexion of our native land presented only a dull and unvaried scene. The indolent shepherd gave his flock a very inadequate portion of fodder, what he did give was destitute of proper nutriment, nothing but the dull and uninviting table a thousand and a thousand times before presented, a banquet with not the least variety of dishes. The ancient prejudice moreover in favour of human learning rendered the qualification of the shepherd a laborious and tedious task. No sooner was the last and chief of dispensations given, than as it manifestly appears, ancient prophecy was accomplished : the word was given and great was the company of the preachers ; the dry bones instantaneously rose and stood on their feet, an exceeding great army ; apostolical times returned, when churches, and chapels, and pulpits became useless apparatus. The lumber of literature was cast away like a menstruous cloth ; the sound of the gospel was heard in the shop and kitchen of every street, and under the oak of every village, (to use the very

happy and appropriate word of brother Wright) from broomsticks ; multitudes indeed there were, and multitudes there still are, who like the Reverend Peter Mills for their evangelical functions, need no tuition but that of the spirit, who themselves untaught, can luminously teach, who in the space of a day can grow up Sampson's of the gospel, smite the Philistine of iniquity hip and thigh ; regale the faithful at the spiritual banquet with dainties of greater variety and novelty than all the bishops and archbishops of Christendom united. I should hail these marvellous lights of the latter days with unfeigned rapture, but for one reflection, which is this, that if the inspiration proceed, the time must inevitably arrive, when all will be preachers, and when consequently, there will be no hearers left : when the eloquent tongue must be unavoidably mute, and the voice of the turtle be no more heard in the land. Deep was that sagacity, and meritorious that fortitude in your founder, which established the itinerant system : casting his eye upon the church he there saw a mournful defect, saw the same tub occupied for half a century by the same performer, and of course with an abundance of the same tale of a tub. This he saw and said, " I know were I to preach a whole year in one place I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep."* He knew that regenerate as well as unregenerate man, like the Athenians of old, required to keep attention awake " some new thing ;" the event has amply justified his expectation.

I boldly appeal unto any man, whether that evangelical structure be not peerless, whose builders

* See Coke's and Moore's Life of Wesley.

can dabble in the troubled waters of corruption, to the extent which the following production displays, and still challenge a sanctity superior to all others. The harmonious union of these opposite elements has indeed at all times been the peculiar boast of Methodism; the sanctity of its youth is by many of its votaries hailed as superior to even its present sublimity, yet even then the leaven which spread through the mass without discomposing one feature of the visage of solemnity, was large, was prodigious; hear the testimony not of an enemy, but of a friend, of a champion of pre-eminent fame, one who in the warfare of faith against the Baal of Calvin, signalized himself above even the chief apostle. "You hear them speak, says he, of the corruption of their hearts in as unaffected a manner as if they talked of freckles in their faces; it seems they run down their sinful nature only to apologize for their sinful practices, or to appear great proficient in self-knowledge, and court the praise due to genuine humility." "To this day their bosom corruption is not only alive but indulged." "Forms and fair shows of godliness deceive us, many whom our Lord might well compare to whited sepulchres, look like angels of light abroad and prove tormenting fiends at home." Relative duties neglected, husbands slight their wives, wives neglect and plague their husbands, masters disobeyed, servants on account of unfaithfulness, indolence, pert answering again, so complained of, that serious persons prefer those who have no knowledge of the truth to those who make high profession." Selfish views, sinister designs, inveterate prejudice, pitiful bigotry, party spirit, self-sufficiency." "Putting the worst construction on each other's

words and actions, false accusation, backbiting, malice, revenge, persecution, and a hundred such evils." "Some do not keep to the great outlines of heathen morality, proceed to that pitch of covetousness and daring injustice, as not to pay their just debts, yea, and to cheat and extort whenever they have a fair opportunity. How few of our societies are there where this or some other evil has not broken out, and given such shakes to the ark of the gospel, that had not the Lord wonderfully interposed, it must have long ago been upset."* Of whom, I pray, speaks the reverend historian here? is it of the tail or the rump of Methodism? Do we not see the very image and superscription of the heads thereof? Do we not behold the evangelists of Millburn-place by no means through a glass darkly, but face to face? another authority in proof of the leaven still continuing at a later period, is that of the Reverend W. Bramwell. Hear this renowned oracle, "We want the power of religion among ourselves." "When were we asked the state of our souls since we were received into the connexion? We may be proud, passionate, envious, malicious, covetous, self-willed, brawlers and triflers, given to jesting, yea tipplers: we may oppose the real work of God, may turn hundreds out of the way, and yet remain travelling preachers; we may lose our first love, zeal, faith, patience, hope, yea every grace, and yet go round the circuit carrying about the ghost of a preacher, who, being dead yet speaketh."† Now, is not the *discipline*

* See Fletcher's first check. The old system of justification by faith being worn to rags, it was found necessary to establish a new one; the best robe of this, no doubt, covered the shoulders of the heroes who engaged in the chapel crusade.

† See Bramwell's letter in the Methodist Monitor.

of Methodism the great boast of Methodism? "It has been, continues my author, one rule with several of us, for many years, to speak evil of no man." Railing moreover, and evil-speaking, are expressly proscribed by the rules of Conference; yet I find it on record that the Reverend Thomas Coke, L. L. D. proclaimed, "the Lord Jesus Christ to have vomited forth Arianism which ran like a stream into the gulf of hell:" Likewise did the Reverend Samuel Bradburn denounce Socinians by the lump, as, "not only condemned sinners, but *damned fools*, as certain of being damned in hell, as if they were already there." As there is no hope it is useless to exhort these polluted fellows to repent. My great author still proceeds. "We are decidedly against what is called Ranterism or Wildness, all kinds of noise in public and private, without the Spirit's influence." Whether, at all times, the Spirit be present, is a matter too arduous for me to decide; that there is in every district, something that bears a very near affinity to Ranterism and Wildness, and all kinds of noise; something sufficient to testify that the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, who will deny? I could add to the above, other authorities in abundance, but the time will fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephtha, and of the Reverend Dr. Adam Clarke's surprisingly heterogeneous discussion upon schism and schismatics, in a luminous note in his Bible, and I must hasten to the summit of all sublimity, a description of Conference itself by the Rev. J. Crowther, which he in a very lively manner depicteth, by the spirit I presume of course, as an "Annual sublime right of six or seven men gath-

ering round the table and fighting with each other, talking by turns, (except when several of them talk together) engrossing all the speechifying, while the rest sit around in sullen, stupid, or indignant silence, the Devil pearching on the front of the gallery ; while love, meekness, wisdom, together with guardian angels, and even the Holy Ghost, quit the assembly, and the Conference group appears to the weeping heavens somewhat like the assembly in a cock-pit.*

The ark of the gospel has indeed of late years received many rude shocks, in addition to those recorded by the Vicar of Madeley. Unhallowed tongues have clamoured against it, unhallowed feet have kicked against it. The armies of Methodism however still wax valiant in fight, Methodising the Heathen abroad. The grain of mustard sown at night, matured in the theological laboratory, becomes by the morning a large tree. A prudent and sagacious public know how to value that, which, like the machinery of commerce, abridges labour, and produces its manufactures fifty and a hundred fold; know how to value sanctity personified in human shape. Provided all other arguments in favour of Methodism were confuted, one remains, which I challenge all its enemies to assail, and which I trust will in future be cherished as the last impregnable bulwark. Do we not see all departments of creation complete? Every animal occupies its congenial element. Let now the most incorrigible bigot cast his eye upon the singular portraits which adorn the Arminian and Methodist Magazines. Let him attentively gaze upon those venerable and hallowed

* See Crowther's Letter to Kilham.

prodigies of physiognomy, and say, if Methodism had never existed, where they must have found a sphere of action. Must they not, like Satan in Job, have been employed (as indeed they now are) in going to and fro upon the earth. But alas! like Noah's dove have found no rest for the soles of their feet? Is the bird more adapted for the air, or the fish for the water, than these to preach the gospel of Methodism? Are not the name and designation written upon the forehead, stamped by the hand of all bountiful nature in indelible characters? This no doubt, the profound sagacity of your founder well knew, and silently laid before the public a proof of his mission, more cogent than the tongues of men and of angels. Let then every land boast of its productions. Peru of its gold. Golconda of its diamonds. Britain equal in arms, in arts, in science, in every accomplishment to all nations, has in preachers of the gospel no compeer. Proudly, pre-eminent here, she presents her worthies, teeming from ten thousand Academies, besides Kingswood and Apperley, which like twin suns in the hemisphere, shine reflecting blaze on blaze. The light is spreading, the majestic river rolling with daily accumulating stream. The zeal of episcopacy was once alive among the tall cedars of Methodism, when the sons of the prophets met in secret divan at Litchfield. I trust it is not yet extinguished. Who can tell but futurity may see the august spectacle of some illustrious scion of the Reverend Peter Mills, seated in lawn sleeves at York or Lambeth, the splendour of the sanctuary, the very excellency of Carmel and Sharon making the desert rejoice, and blossom like the rose?

To conclude—The task of thus exposing the

vices and follies of some of your leading men, is humiliating, but unblushing rascality calls forth the animadversions of every friend of mankind, and under an imperious sense of duty I have contributed my mite towards the information of the public. But let it not be supposed that I contend at all against the Methodists as a body. I neither wish to degrade nor exalt the sect or its creed. I leave their proverbial ignorance,—their sincere piety,—their pharisaical pride,—their real humility to be balanced, and the account adjusted by themselves, and their all-wise Creator. Contending for no peculiar faith or sect, I give them a plain unvarnished tale, which needs no comment,—which shews in their true colours a race of men who have crawled into the priests' office that they may eat a piece of bread, and who can themselves only hope and expect to be forgotten by posterity. Perhaps the rational man who views the general conduct of the large body of Methodists, with the impartial eye of a philosopher, while looking at the dark shades of their conduct, would recommend to their consideration, what they certainly appear to be ignorant of, that opinions or doctrines constitute no part of religion. That contentions for doctrines, and a spirit of proselytism, are the offspring of arrogance and folly; and in short, that real piety is most laudably expressed by silence and submission.

I am,

The Editor.

A NEW
PORTRAIT
OF
METHODISM.

IN the latter end of the Year 1783, the principal persons belonging to the Methodist Society at North-Shields, had a meeting, to consider about getting a piece of ground, to build a new Chapel on, the lease of the old one being nearly out. At this meeting, a Dr. Watson (not a Member of our Society) attended, he proposed selling us a piece of ground, for the above purpose. The company went in a body to view the ground, which they unanimously condemned, as an improper place for us to build on, the ground lying against a cliff or bank, 32 feet high; a common shore running through it, an old pit stake being at the bottom of the bank, and two drifts underneath, and running through the said ground; also the road leading to it from the street being so narrow, that it would only admit of one person to pass in the breadth, and that up a stairs of 50 steps. From these circumstances we rejected the Dr's. ground, but at the same time, thanked him for his friendly intentions of serving us. In Sept. 1785 the Dr. brought the matter of this ground up again, and having now prevailed with Mr. John Reed, (who lived near the place) to give his approbation to his ground, he then wrote to Mr. Wesley for his sanction, and soon after he reported, that he had got Mr. Wesley's positive order, that a Preaching-house should be built *on his ground* and no-where else. He then desired that Mr. Snowden (our assistant preacher) would call a

meeting of the Society. A meeting was called, the ground viewed and measured, &c. the second time. At this meeting, both the Dr. and his ground were condemned, he for teasing and sowing discord in the Society. The former objections to the ground were brought forward at this meeting, it was also observed, that the quantity of ground was too small, being only $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth.

The Dr. then began to form a party, and got three or four persons to join him, namely John Reed, W. Rose and T. Fothergill, and these being very clamorous, we consented to have a third meeting called, at which we consulted our friend Sam. Reed of Newcastle, House Carpenter, he gave it as his opinion, that the Dr's. ground was very improper for such a purpose, that a house built there would cost at least £100 *more*, than a like house would cost on plain ground, and he also doubted if a proper foundation could be got. He was of our opinion, that the quantity of ground was too small, and the price set on it too high. Those objections being made known to the Dr. he and his party desired to meet us again, a fourth time. At this meeting he produced a plan of the ground, wherein he had stretched it from $26\frac{1}{2}$ feet to 42 feet, but as by this time a great noise had been made about the affair, some persons suggested to us, to be cautious in what we did respecting the ground, for it could not belong to the Dr. but must be the property of the Earl of Carlisle, whose ground joined the Dr's. and they gave this as their reason; because the persons who had worked a Colliery there, paid the rent to the Earl for working in that said piece of ground. The Dr. was now asked, how he came by the ground? If he had any deed or writing to show it? He answered, he thought himself affronted by such enquiries being made. He was then asked, if he could indemnify us, if we should build on the ground? He answered, he would not, he thought his word and honour were quite sufficient. E. Coates then addressed the company, and told them, that *he was now perfectly satisfied*, that the Dr. could not give a *proper title to the ground*, and of this he was so confident, that, he (with the consent of his friends) would rest the whole cause upon this single point, that if the Dr. would shew deeds of the ground and prove it to be his property, then, he would give up all opposition. To this it was answered by the Dr. and his

party, that such vile insinuations were unworthy of any other answer than prosecution, but that we should see that a Chapel should be built there, and no-where else. Thus ended the fourth meeting. In the mean time, Mr. Wesley was written to, and made acquainted with every circumstance, and he wrote to Mr. Snowden "that he had nothing to do with Dr. Watson, that the people upon the spot must be the best judges of what was proper; only he would advise us to have nothing to do with *banky ground*, but to get *level ground, and freehold if possible*." A committee was now appointed to look out for a proper piece of ground. Several pieces of ground were found very suitable, and convenient, and the owners willing to sell; but no sooner was this known by the Dr. than he circumvented us, by very ungenerous insinuations, such as "Mr. Wesley had given *him* orders, to build a Chapel, on *his* own *ground*, and that no other ground would be paid for, and great care should be taken not to suffer us to build near any dwelling-houses, because it would disturb the public tranquillity, by the noise at the meeting nights." Those words he said to Mr. Collingwood, and some other persons also. With these and such like insinuations, did he prevent us, three several times, from getting ground, and we were at last obliged to purchase ground by proxy: for this purpose we employed Mr. John Stake of Newcastle, who bought a piece of ground in Millburn-Place, in his own name: this was in January 1786.

As soon as this was known by the Dr. and his party, they began a subscription for their intended house. It has been said that £20 was subscribed by the party, but that Mr. Reed never got the money. We now began a subscription, which soon amounted to £130, and we immediately set forward with our building, and by the time Mr. Wesley came in the spring following, we had it covered in. The other party had got so forward with their house, as to have the walls raised a little above the ground, for they had met with very great difficulties in getting a foundation, and the Dr. had prevailed on Mr. Reed to take the *whole concern* upon himself, and that *without any assignment* of the ground made to him. On or about the 9th, of June 1786. Mr. Wesley came to North Shields, he was taken to see both houses, and he expressed his disapprobation, of what Mr.

Reed was doing in very strong terms. Mr. Reed had now the whole concern upon himself, but all the party gave out, that Mr. Reed had *Mr. Wesley's orders*, to build the Chapel. Of this Mr. Wesley was informed, but he told us, he had nothing to do with them, nor *would* he have anything to do with them; and advised us to keep ourselves quiet, and never concern ourselves with what they did, but go on and finish our work. He preached at the end of our new Chapel, to a very large congregation from Mark iii. 35. He and his friends dined at E. Coates', (as usual) at dinner he continued to reprobate the opposition-party, and to encourage us to go on, telling Mr. Snowden, "You know George, I told you from the beginning I had nothing to do with these men, we should be *mad-men* to have any concern with them."

After dinner he set off for Sunderland. In the course of the afternoon, Mr. Snowden came to E. Coates' and asked him if he had heard the report that was going about concerning Mr. Wesley? E. Coates answered, No, what report? Mr. Snowden said, it is reported that Mr. Wesley has put off the settling of the Chapel, till to-morrow, and then after service in the Shore Side Church (where Mr. Wesley was to preach) is ended, he will declare his mind, and finally settle the matter. To this E. Coates answered, you know Mr. Snowden, and we all know what Mr. Wesley has said to-day upon these matters, and what can he say more? Has he not told us over and over not to trouble ourselves about the other party? *that he has nothing to do with them?* Mr. Snowden replied, but you do not know Mr. Wesley as well as I do. I tell you there must be something in it, and you and I must go to Sunderland to-morrow. After much persuasion E. Coates consented to go, and accordingly they went to Sunderland the next day. We (E. Coates and Mr. Snowden) went to Church, and after service was ended, we waited at the Church door till all the congregation was come out, and wondered what had become of Mr. Wesley, for we were sure he had not passed us. But it seems he had gone out at a little door which leads to the parson's house. We had now waited till all the Sunderland friends had passed us, without their taking any notice of us. We met with Mr. Smith, who told us Mr. Wesley dined at Mr. R. Hutton's, and that we might see

him after dinner. We went to the George Inn, and dined; after which we went to Mr. Hutton's, and had an interview with Mr. Wesley, Mr. Smith being present. Mr. Snowden opened the business by observing what had been reported at North Shields the day before, respecting the Chapels, and the uneasiness of our friends on that account, Mr. Wesley answered, "*the low house must have preaching with you in its turn.*"

Mr. Snowden. How is that Sir? we understood you very differently when at North-Shields yesterday, were you not acquainted with the whole affair before our house was begun? Mr. Wesley answered, "yes." Mr. Snowden. Did you not give your approbation to what we have done? Mr. Wesley. Yes, but I am credibly informed, that that house at Millbourn place is to be private property, that one Wm. Todd, and one E. Coates, mean to make that house *their own*, and so cheat the friends out of their money; if so, I will wash my hands of them and it too. E. Coates. I am one of those persons you allude to Sir, my name is Coates, and I believe I may answer for my friend Todd as well as for myself in this matter, and I do declare, that I never had any other thought or intention, but that it should be a Methodist Chapel for ever, and I defy any man to point out any thing in my conduct, that will give him reason to ground such a vile censure upon me, and whoever has said so, is a vile *liar* and slanderer.

Mr. Smith. This must come from the wicked Dr.; that man is a monster of wickedness, and sticks at nothing to accomplish his purpose. E. Coates. Whoever has said it, is a liar and slanderer, and if Mr. Wesley will be so good as to bring the accuser before my face I will make him ashamed, if he has so much virtue left in him as to be ashamed of a vile action. Mr. Wesley made no reply. E. Coates then begged he would let him know the name of the accuser. Mr. Wesley still made no reply, but after a considerable pause said, "Well if that house at Millbourn place is settled on the Conference I am satisfied." Mr. Snowden. Do you mean to have two societies Sir, in North Shields? Mr. Wesley answered, "no, we should be mad to think of that. The society must be at your house, that house that Mr. Reed is building *is to be mine*, they have made me a present of it!" E. Coates. Indeed Sir, they

will not do any such thing. Mr. Wesley replied, "they have this day promised it before a dozen witnesses, *that the house shall be mine*, Mr. Reed finishes the house at *his own expence*, without a shilling charge to me, or any belonging to me, and when finished, will make it over to me and mine for ever; a noble offer—I never had the like of it offered to me before, I wish I had twenty houses on these terms—I would find preachers for them all!" E. Coates. "They may promise what they please but they never will fulfil any such promise, it is not in their power to do it." Mr. Wesley replied, they have promised it,—they sought me, I did not seek them, and the moment they go from their promise, I'll drop them, and have *nothing more to do with them.*" Thus ended our interview with Mr. Wesley at Sunderland. We were asked to walk into Mr. Hutton's parlour, where were a great many of Mr. Wesley's friends. Mr. Wood (the preacher) asked E. Coates a few curious questions, 1st. By what authority did we build that house at Millbourn place? 2nd. Did we apply to Conference for leave to build it? 3rd. Had we a licence from Conference? 4th. Had we given the *Conference a bond of security*? To these questions, E. Coates answered. "We built the house by our own authority, and with our own money. We never thought of the Conference pretending any claim to our money or property, we had Mr. Wesley's sanction for what we did, and we had never imagined that any thing more was necessary." Mr. Wood said, he supposed we meant to make private property of it. E. Coates replied, that some person or persons, had been wicked enough to insinuate as much to Mr. Wesley; but whoever had done it was a vile slanderer.* After having received several incivilities from the company (who seemed to think they could not shew a proper respect to the Preachers, without giving them their support and sanction in every thing they might say or do), we took our leave and set out to come home. On our way home we met with Mr. John Reed, we asked him, if he had had an interview with Mr. Wesley? He said, he was with Mr. Wesley a very little while in the parson's house. We told him, that

*E. Coates did not know then that Mr. Wood was the slanderer.

we had been informed, that he had promised to make Mr. Wesley a present of his house when it was finished. He answered *he had not*, and that there was not any *thing like it mentioned*. We then asked him, what passed between him and Mr. Wesley. He said, after the service at church was ended, Mr. Wesley went into the parson's house, with several persons in company with him. Mr. Wesley then asked Mr. Reed, "if he wished to have *all* the preaching at his house?" to which Mr. Reed answered, no, that he only wished to have it in his turn. Mr. Wesley replied, "Mr. Reed go on and finish your house, and I will take care you shall be properly supported." This account of Mr. Reed's quite astonished us. We then told him that Mr. Wesley himself told us the matter. He then solemnly *declared that nothing of the kind passed between them, and that no other person but himself had any right to make such a promise!* This is a most extraordinary affair, Mr. Wesley said, he had a *dozen witnesses* of the thing. Mr. Reed, Dr. Watson and all concerned with him, deny the thing, and although I have called upon Mr. Wesley, and his preachers, again and again, to produce only *two witnesses*, and I would be satisfied, yet they never could produce one!!!

Some little time after this, Reed and Watson wrote Mr. Wesley, "that some of his enemies had circulated a report, that they had promised to make him a present of the Chapel, but this could not be done, and if any such thing had been understood it was a mistake."

Thus matters rested, till the Conference 1786. when we sent a statement of the case and a remonstrance to Mr. Wesley and his preachers, praying for redress of this grievance, but they would not suffer our statement, &c. to be read. And although Messrs. Reed and Watson had written to Mr. Wesley, that *the Chapel would not be given to him*, but on the contrary, that it was expected it would be paid for by the Connection, yet Mr. Wesley did *not give them up* as he had promised, (at Sunderland) but the affair was debated for two days, whether they should take Mr. Reed's Chapel into their connection or not!! But being told, if they took that Chapel, they would certainly loose that at Millbourn place, with the whole society also, they came to this *conclusion*, that Dr. Coke should write to the parties to the following purport—

London, August 11th. 1786.

My Dear Brother,

The Conference have desired me to inform you that, they shall be very well satisfied if you settle the Preaching-house in which you have been concerned, on the Conference Plan. But you must remember, the Deed must be enrolled in Chancery within six months after the execution of it.

I am your affectionate Brother,

*To Mr. Edward Coates,
North-Shields.*

Thos. Coke.

This letter was not at all satisfactory. Here was no mention made of the opposition, as if they had given up the other house (although such a report was circulated by some of the preachers from Conference). Having therefore been so often duped by them, we were doubtful of their sincerity, and judged if we should settle our house on the Conference plan, we should then be in difficulties, and they at full liberty to take the other house when they pleased. We had offered them our house, but upon *condition* of finally giving up the other that Mr. Reed was building. Messrs. Reed and Watson's report was, that the Conference had appointed that they were to have preachers sent them, as soon as their house was ready. Being very desirous of knowing what answer the Conference had sent them, whether it was a final rejection, or a mere put off, till they got our house secured, (which was the thing they aimed at) I at length got a sight of Dr. Coke's letter to Dr. Watson on the business, and took a Copy of the same, which is as follows :—

Lynn, Norfolk, August 12th. 1786.

Dear Brother,

I am desired by the Conference to inform you, 1st. We can have nothing to do with your Preaching house *until* you have settled every thing concerning the house in a clear manner with the Earl of Carlisle. 2nd. That you are not to expect any assistance from Conference

with respect to money, as we have no money for Preaching-houses, the money raised for the contingent Fund not being sufficient to defray the necessary expence.

I am your affectionate Brother,

To Dr. Watson,

Thos. Coke.

North Shields.

Although Mr. Reed had now positively declared that no such thing had ever been intended, or said, "that the house would be made a present of to Mr. Wesley," and also, that the claim of the Earl of Carlisle had now become a very serious affair, and Mr. Snowden had remonstrated with Mr. Wesley and Conference, on the impropriety and reproach of having *any thing to do with* a house so circumstanced; yet it was debated for two days, and then concluded as above. Hence it is easy to see, they did not intend to give up the opposition cause, but meant to amuse us, till they got our house *secured*, and then constrain the above to give up theirs also.—Mr. Wesley used to say, "we'll rub them one against the other, till they both comply, but if one should fly off, we shall always get the other." They had now gone from the asserted promise of making Mr. Wesley a present of the house, but it does not appear that Dr. Coke had any orders to charge them with their breach of promise, nor did Mr. Wesley drop them, as he had promised to do when at Sunderland.

Our house would undoubtedly have been settled on the Conference plan, if we had not discovered the deception made use of to ensnare us. For when we had found out that Mr. Wesley had deceived us, in telling us "he had not, nor would he have, any thing to do with the opposition house," while, at the same time, he was acting a contrary part behind the curtain; and the Conference answered in such an ambiguous way, we were quite alarmed and astonished to find that those persons, whom we took for our friends, and in whom we put the utmost confidence, were, in reality, the most dangerous enemies we had. From this time we lost all confidence in them.

Mr. Andrew Englos was appointed our assistant. He was ordered at his first coming to get our house settled on the Conference plan. We told him if the other house was

finally given up, we would do it, but not otherwise. He was honest enough to say, he had his doubts about its being given up, but at the same time, he told us that the settling of the house might be the only thing *we could do* to get an end put to the opposition, as then Mr. Wesley and the Conference could *not have a shadow of reason* for countenancing it. We answered, we had already proposed to Mr. Wesley and the Conference, to settle our house *on that condition*, but to that they had given us no answer; and thus the matter rested for the present. At this Conference they appointed that we should have the *Church service read in our new Chapel, on Sunday forenoons*. To this, most of us were very much averse, from the idea, that it would lead to a dissenting from the Church, to which most of us were very much attached, but we came to this conclusion, that as they had ordered it, we would not oppose it, lest they should lay hold of it, as a reason for opposing us; and also, we thought it might be proper to give it a fair trial, and then if it answered any good end, it might be continued, if not, laid aside.

Our Chapel was opened for divine Service on Sunday morning, Sept. 1786. by Mr. Englos, who read Mr. Wesley's abridgement of the Church Service. Soon after this Dr. Watson and his party reported, that Mr. Wesley had ordered the preacher's to their house, and accordingly gave public notice, "that Mr. Englos would preach in their Chapel on the next Sunday." This report spread fresh alarm in our Society, and Mr. Englos was wrote to, to know if he meant to do so. He sent us for answer, "that he was very sorry for the pain our Society had suffered from its having been published that he was to preach at Mr. Reed's house,—that it was done without his knowledge and consent," and to convince us of his sincerity, he sent us a copy of a joint letter that he and the other preachers had sent to Messrs. Reed and Watson, on the above occasion.

Newcastle, Nov. 14th, 1786.

Gentlemen,

We, the preachers of the Newcastle circuit, being all present, have considered the state and case of your cause, and are all of one mind, we cannot have any thing to

do with it. We are convinced it is our duty to cleave to our brethren, and our own Society, and not to preach in your house. We hope you will be satisfied with this for a final answer, and have no further dependance on us.

We are, Gentlemen,

Your humble Servants,

*To Messrs. Reed and Watson,
North Shields.*

*Andw. Englos,
Jos. Sanderson,
Wm. Percival.*

Some little time after this, we were given to understand that Mr. Wood, of the Sunderland circuit, was going to take the opposition house into his circuit, and give it a regular supply of preaching; and not long after Mr. Wood summoned Mr. Englos, and the parties concerned, to appear before him at Sunderland, "to shew cause, why *he* should not take that house into *his* circuit." In obedience to his Excellency's mandate, we waited on him at the time and place appointed, and were much surprised to find that a great number of the Sunderland friends* seemed to be determined to join in the opposition, and give us all the trouble and uneasiness they could. We urged the decision of the last Conference,—the irregularity of one circuit interfering with another,—Mr. Wesley's declaration of dropping them, when they went from their promise of giving him the house; the danger of the example of countenancing a set of disorderly men, in opposition to an old and regular Society,—the scandal of having any thing to do with a house built on another man's ground, in spite of all remonstrance. They answered these reasons with sneers and contempt, and told us, they had Mr. Wesley's sanction. Mr. Englos wrote to Mr. Wesley upon this, and received the following answer.

*I have been told that the reason why these men espoused this dirty cause, was, that the Dr. held in his hands the deeds of the Shore Side house, and refused to deliver them up, but upon the condition of their support in the opposition house. Whatever the Dr. did in this bargain, I am sure they fulfilled their part of it.

London, Jan. 20th, 1787.

Dear Andrew,

Are you afraid lest James Wood's coming to Shields will tear the Society in pieces? In the name of wonder why then do you not prevent it, while it is in your power! I have said, I will not require you to do this, but I advise you immediately to take that house into your own hands. You may do it so as to bring no burden upon us, and I see nothing that hinders you, but a *silly sense of honour*.*

I am dear Andrew, your's,
John Wesley.

Here Mr. Wesley peeps out from behind the curtain again, and plainly discovers that he still has his eye fixed upon the house, and if he can but get it secured, he is quite regardless of other circumstances. This letter of his occasioned E. Coates to write in the following manner to Mr. Wesley.

North Shields, Jan. 24th, 1787.

Rev. and dear Sir,

This is the first time I have had the honour of addressing you by letter. I am very sorry for the painful circumstance which occasions it. You are not unacquainted (I presume) with the opposition made by a party of disorderly men, to your Society at North Shields, in our building a Chapel for the use of you and your preachers, as well as for ourselves. Now those men that oppose us say, that they have *all along, even from the beginning, acted by your order and sanction, and we also say* (and that most truly) that we have from the *very first, acted by your order and sanction*, in all that we have done, respecting our building a Chapel, &c. But can we *both* have acted under your sanction, in what we have done in this matter? While you were telling us, you had "*nothing to do with those men,*" and

*i. e. The fear of being reproached, on account of the Earl's claim on the house.

desired us not to trouble ourselves about them, nor mind any thing they might say." Were you telling them to "go on and finish their house, and you would take care they should be properly supported?" Can this be possible? I was very much surprized to hear you say, when at Sunderland last summer, that "Dr. Watson's house was to have preaching in its turn with us," *because* "they had promised to give you the house as a deed of gift." You may remember I then said, they would never fulfil their promise. You answered, "they had promised it before a dozen witnesses, *and if they went from their promise, you would drop them.*" They *went from their promise*, but you have not dropt them? The Conference informed us, it was left to Mr. Englos to settle,—but has it been so? Nay, a Mr. Wood, in another circuit, says he is to settle it, and that by your order! What a pity that candour and truth should not have been more attended to in this affair, (and that from the very beginning,) than appears to have been the case from a review of circumstances. Does Methodism require deception and falsehood to support it? I am really sorry for some characters, who must suffer considerably when certain circumstances are made generally known. I assure you, Sir, if we had ever thought that you would ever have given countenance, or encouragement, to any other party than ourselves, in building a Chapel in this Town, we would not have built any. 7 or £800 is a sum by no means convenient, for a few poor tradesmen to throw away, nor is it any good work in preachers of the Gospel, to deal so largely in deception and worldly policy, and thus to sport themselves, with the property of their poor friends. We think we have not only been unfriendly, but even unjustly used. We have generously contributed to the necessities of the connexion, for a number of years, and when we had occasion for help from it, it was not only denied us, but the friends were *cautioned*, and *charged* by the preachers, not to give us any assistance; adding to this an opposition encouraged by those very persons whom we had reason to expect would give us every reasonable support, and in whom we put the utmost confidence, is very hard indeed. But this religious policy is as bad as it is wicked, for two Methodist Preaching-houses in this town can never be properly supported for any length of time, one of them must fall or leave the connexion,—but how dread-

ful must be the conflict, till that come to pass ! Two contrary interests will naturally occasion great contentions, and keep the persons concerned at perpetual variance, and also be the means of sowing discord both amongst the preachers and people. The preacher cannot please both parties. What a reproach to the leaders of Methodism, when the circumstances of the opposition are considered ! We commit our cause into the hands of Him who judgeth rightly, and if our ways please him, he will help us, and turn the devices of our adversaries upon their own heads with shame and confusion. Wishing you, dear Sir, a right judgment in this affair, and prosperity in all good things,

I am, your humble servant,

Edward Coates.

To the said Letter I received the following answer:

London, Jan. 31st, 1787.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Wesley begs me to inform you, that he has but one end in all things, he wishes to do all he can for the good of mankind, as it stands connected with the will of God. If in any thing he mistakes the means, in order to effect the thing he so much wishes, 'tis because of the smallness of his judgment, and not the badness of his intention. I am therefore to say he now thinks it his duty to take the Dr's. house into one of the circuits, if he (the Dr.) agrees to the conditions contained in Mr. Rankin's letter. If Mr. Englos can take it into the Newcastle circuit, Mr. Wesley thinks it will be the best ; if not, Mr. Wood can take the house into his circuit,—only Mr. Wesley thinks it would not be proper to open the house before the matter in contest is over betwixt the Earl and the Dr. I wish my letter was more pleasing to all of you. I can now only recommend you to God, and that you may be directed by him in all things, is the prayer of your's,

To Mr. Edward Coates,

John Broadbent.

North Shields.

The time between this and the next Conference seems to

have been chiefly employed by the Dr. (on one side) in trying to bring Mr. Wesley (or the connexion) into the expense, and risk of the house, and by Mr. Wesley (on the other side) trying to get the house for nothing; all this time poor Mr. Reed seems to have been duped by both parties, as appears from an interview between Messrs. Englos, Smith, Reed, Watson, and several others, when Mr. Reed said, he had disbursed all the money for the house, but he fully expected to be reimbursed, as he built the house by Mr. Wesley's orders. Being here opposed by Messrs. Englos and Smith, he further said, if Mr. Wesley did not pay him what the house cost, he would sue him for it. Of all this Mr. Wesley was informed, but it made no alteration in his conduct; for he and his preachers still tried to get Mr. Reed to assign the house over to themselves, and the only thing that seems to have hindered it was, the want of a proper deed for the ground. Matters now rested till the Conference, held at Manchester, 1787. In the mean time we were kept in general anxiety and uneasiness, being teased by Mr. Wesley and his preachers to settle our house on the Conference plan, and also threatened, if we did not comply that the preachers should be taken away from us, and the other house taken into the connexion immediately. Dr. Watson attended the Conference, and a committee was appointed once more to settle the business. The following letter from Mr. Englos shews how the matter was settled, and how little Mr. Wesley and his preachers value the peace of their societies, and the honour of their religion, in comparison of worldly property.

Manchester, August 3rd, 1787.

Dear Brother,

I send this to inform you, that Mr. Smith and I have done all in our power to prevent the Conference from suffering the preachers to preach in Dr. Watson's house, but am sorry to say we have not succeeded to our wishes. A committee was chosen, to hear and judge the case, but they were too much of Mr. Wood's spirit, at his quarter day. Mr. Wood has done all that he could to prevent it, but all to no purpose, the pit he dug for me he has fallen into himself. Your preachers are, James Wood,

William Thom, and Thomas Wride. What to advise you to do I am at a loss, but calmly wait till you see your assistant, and hear what he intends to do. I tremble for consequences; but the great Pilot stands at the Helm. With love to all friends,

I remain, dear Sir, your's affectionately,

To Mr. Edward Coates,

Andrew Englos.

North Shields.

About the same time the following letter was received from a friend, who had been at Conference :

Dear Sir,

I have been at the Conference, and am very sorry to find, that Dr. Watson has so far succeeded as to have preaching at his house. Mr. Englos and Mr. Smith have done all they could to prevent it; Mr. Smith is exceedingly grieved, but tells me, for his part, he will never go into their house. Keep yourselves quiet, and wait the event; for surely after all, it must come to nothing. I think it *impossible* that you can unite with that party.

I am, dear Sir, your's, &c.

To Mr. Edward Coates,

G—— S—— D——

North Shields.

When Mr. Wood came to the circuit he seemed to have been thoroughly convinced of the impropriety of having any thing to do with the opposition party, and therefore put off his going to preach at the Dr's. house (as it was called) till he had remonstrated with Mr. Wesley about it. After which I received the following letter from Mr. Wood :

My dear Brother,

On Thursday evening I received another letter from Mr. Bradford, which as it is short, I will transcribe. "On receiving your two letters at Bristol, I took "Messrs. Watson and Rhodes with me to Mr. Wesley, but "he would not hear any thing from either of us on the sub- "ject of the houses. This day, Dr. Coke, with myself,

“endeavoured to prevail with him to hear your reasons, &c.
 “but as he had told us at Bristol, so again, he to-day told
 “us that he would hear *nothing more* on that subject, and
 “that if you did not comply, he should be displeased with
 “you.” The Dr. with myself, think it best for you to avoid
 breaking with Mr. Wesley. Let other things go on as they
 may, you have done your best. Peace be with you.

In conversing with my brethren, we all thought nothing
 more could be done to prevent the apparent evil, and have
 therefore appointed (unless any thing unforeseen should
 happen), for Mr. Thom to preach there next Sunday se’n-
 night, at half past one o’clock. I wish you and all our
 friends in North Shields to stand still, and wait with pati-
 ence the event. Unite in prayer, that he who sits above
 the water floods may over-rule these things for general
 good.

Your affectionate Brother,

Newcastle, Sept. r.

James Wood.

13th. 1787.

P. S. If you still continue to receive us, which I hope
 you will, I think you may depend on all the help I and my
 brethren can give you.

From this time the Preachers went regularly to the Dr’s.
 (or more properly Mr. Reed’s) house, and great contentions
 and uneasiness existed between both parties. We had now
 two parties (or Societies) in the same connexion. Each
 had its own party interest, and as they both thought, even
 their very existence (as a Society) at stake, and therefore
 strove, with all their might, to support their own cause; this
 it would seem led the opposition party, who now clearly
 saw, that two Methodist Societies in this town could not
 long subsist, to seek the entire destruction, as they had
 done all along, of our Society, and that as speedily as pos-
 sible. To this end, they were continually labouring to
 prejudice Mr. Wesley against us, by telling him, that we
 were quite averse to the Methodist discipline,—that we
 never meant to settle our house on the Conference plan,—
 and also some of the preachers joined in this dirty and base
 work, and were continually swaggering over us, and telling

us, that if we did not give our house up to Conference, Mr. Wesley would cut us off, for they were determined not to preach in any houses, but what were their own. They branded us with the name of Dissenters, Independents, &c. &c. and the reasons they gave for calling us those names were, that they looked upon none to be Methodist Societies, but such as had given their Chapels up to Conference.

A little before Mr. Wood took in the opposition house, Mr. Wm. Hunter (who was then in the Sunderland circuit) came to North Shields to preach in that house, intending that if Mr. Wood did not take it into the Newcastle circuit, he, (Mr. Hunter) would take it into the Sunderland circuit, and supply it in a regular way. At this time Mr. Hunter called in at Mr. Rawson's, where was Edward Coates, and several others, on a tea drinking visit. Mr. Hunter asked the company to go and hear him preach that evening in Mr. Reed's house, but the company all replying in the negative, that they never meant to set foot in that house, he seemed much offended, and desired to know the reason. This brought on a long conversation between him and Edward Coates, who told him that the house he was going to preach in, was begun, and carried on, in the spirit of opposition to the Society at North Shields, and that Mr. Wesley must have been greatly imposed upon by their specious pretensions of making him a present of the house, or he never would have given them any encouragement,—that he thought it a reproach to the connexion that any countenance should have been given to such a set of disorderly men, who amongst other bad things that they had been guilty of, had removed their neighbour's land-mark, and had taken what did not belong to them. Mr. Hunter answered that he had that day “read over all the letters that had passed between Mr. Wesley and Mr. Reed, on that business, from the very beginning, and that he now clearly saw, that Mr. Reed and Dr. Watson had taken *no step* in what they had done, without consulting Mr. Wesley, and having his *positive orders*; and that, from the *very beginning*, Mr. Wesley had ordered Mr. Reed to build that house, and that he would take it, and pay for it too, as he had promised!”

At this account given by Mr. Hunter, E. Coates expressed his surprise, and want of confidence, because Mr. Wesley

had declared the contrary, and that repeatedly. Mr. Hunter then said, "he thought himself affronted by any doubt being entertained of the truth of what he had advanced," and accordingly, much displeased, he immediately left the company.

In the spring of the year 1788, Mr. Englos hearing of Dr. Coke's coming to the north, wrote to him, and desired him to favour us with a visit. In answer to this invitation the Dr. was so obliging as to write the following letter, directed *to us at Millbourn place*. Mr. Englos being then in the Sunderland circuit.

York, March 5th. 1788.

My very dear Brethren,

I received your letter from Durham, and have no objections to preach, read prayers, and administer the sacrament, next Sunday morning, at North Shields, in the Chapel built by the Society, and desire it may be published accordingly.

I am, your very affectionate Brother,

Thomas Coke.

The Dr. accordingly came at the time appointed, attended by Messrs. Englos, Wood, Wride and Smith. The congregation was very large, and the communicants in proportion. The Dr. and his friends dined at E. Coates', as did also several of the Trustees.

The Dr. being asked how he liked our Chapel at Millbourn place, he replied, it was a very neat house, as any he had seen,—that we must unite with the People down street, and make the two houses and their expence a joint concern,—that he hoped his coming to North Shields would be attended with the blessed effects of uniting both parties into one body. To this it was answered, by the whole company, that an union with the opposition party could never take place, the persons concerned not being fit to be members of a Methodist Society, and also, that we could never think of joining our concerns with theirs, our house had been *honestly built*, and all our affairs, as far as we were concerned, conducted in an honourable way.

The Dr. exclaimed, "I say, you *must unite*, or you will go to Hell, and be damned for ever and ever!!!"

E. Coates. I hope not Dr., you surely do not mean to recommend it to us, to unite with the wicked and ungodly.

Dr. Coke. Who do you mean by the wicked and ungodly?

E. Coates. Men that tell lies, that slander their neighbours, and that take other men's property without their leave or purchase.

Dr. Coke. Who are those men? Messrs.

Englos, Wood, and Smith replied, Dr. Watson and his party are such men, the Dr. is as cunning and wicked as the

Devil. Dr. Coke. If the Dr. is that cunning and artful

man you represent him to be, why do you not make a friend of him? E. Coates. Make a friend of the Dr.!

Dr. Coke. Yes, I say, make a friend of him, if he is capable of doing you so much harm, it would be your *wisdom* to take him

into the connexion, and so make a friend of him. E.

Coates. Indeed Dr. you put me in mind of a story, that I have somewhere heard, of a Popish ecclesiastic, who had

been musing in his cell upon the great evil that Satan had done the church, in all ages of the world, and at last he

came to this resolution, to petition his holiness to take the devil into the church communion, and so make a friend of

him. At this the Rev. Dr. broke thro' all bounds, he stamped with his feet, thumped with his hands, and with

all his might cried out, the Dr. is a better man than you! He has more sense than you, more wisdom than you, and

he has more piety than you,—and I say, if you will not unite with him, you will go to hell, and be damned for ever and

ever.*

*This threat of being sent to hell for departure from the old ship—the good old way, is as old as the infallibility of the Pope, it has been preached ever since the time of Pope Gregory, even down to old father Pawson. If you lost a father, or a son, old Pawson used to set to work, slap dash, with "inky fingers and greasy thumbs," to write you a consolatory letter, to tell you, you had lost your first love, you no longer held the true faith, you had sinned wofully, and God was punishing you for it here, and if you did not depart from the error of your ways, downward you must travel hereafter, always, mind ye, blessing the Lord at the same time that it was not his own case.

The poor Dr. is gone, and worthless as he was, I trust his spirit may find that mercy which he refused to his fellow mortals here, yet he professed to know very well, (if we are to believe his hell-fire Sermon, as it used to be technically called) to what sort of an abode he was dismiss-

The preachers then endeavoured to calm the Dr. by telling him, he did not know the men, nor the manner of their life and conduct. The Dr. in reply, bid them hold their tongues, he would not be dictated to by them. After the heat had a little subsided, we sat down to dinner. The Dr. asked if our Chapel was settled on the Conference plan? E. Coates answered, no, we do not understand the Conference plan. The Dr. then blamed Mr. Wood, that he had not got the house secured sooner. Mr. Wood replied, that the friends were averse to the settling of the houses, from the apprehensions of their not being able to support it, if the opposition was continued. But if the other house was given up, he believed the friends would have no objections to settle it agreeable to Mr. Wesley's mind. Dr. Coke. The house must be settled, or Mr. Wesley will be displeased, and withdraw the preachers. E. Coates. We should be much obliged to you, Sir, if you would be so kind as to explain the Conference plan; we do not understand it. Dr. Coke. The premises must be assigned over to Mr. Wesley, for his use during his life, and then to the Methodist Conference, and their successors for ever; the deeds must be enrolled in chancery, and lodged in the iron Chest, under the New Chapel, in London. E. Coates. If we make the premises over to you, we hope you will take care and pay the debt that is upon them? Dr. Coke. We pay no debts on preaching houses. E. Coates. Pray Sir, does not the yearly collection go toward such purposes? Dr. Coke. No, we have other uses for it, we have no money for preaching houses. This declaration of the Dr's. quite surprised the Trustees, who had all along entertained the idea, that

sing these dear brethren of his at North Shields; he used to be very minute in his description of the Knives, Red-hot Tongs, Gridirons, &c. which cut up and fried the damned in hell. Indeed the plain wayfaring christian is now quite astonished at the intimate knowledge the Methodists have of the next world. When a soul is departed, they know where it is gone as well as if they had followed it,---they describe situations, conversations, and deeds done, both in heaven and hell, as minutely as if they went to market there once a week. This said Dr. was used to be very exact in his description of hell and its torments; and poor simple Valton of canting memory, used to send messages to heaven by the departing saints, and was often particular in requesting them to give his love to St. Paul.

if we gave up the house, the Conference would pay for it. Wm. Todd. What Sir, do you want our house, and will not pay for it? Dr. Coke. Yes Sir, and we won't pay a shilling for it, we will have it without a shilling charge to us, or we will not have it at all. Wm. Todd. Then you shall not have it, we will follow the first law in nature, we will take care of ourselves, and keep our house. E. Coates. But pray Dr. if the premises be settled on the Conference plan, will the Trustees have power to mortgage or sell if needful? Dr. Coke. No not without the leave and consent of Conference; they must ask leave of Conference so to do. E. Coates. It seems very hard, that we should build houses with our own money, and then be required to assign them over to Conference, and thereby put it out of our power to sell or mortgage without their concurrence, which I think is equal to a prohibition; for who would either buy, or take security on premises that have been previously assigned over to a number of men, who are dispersed all over the kingdom; without having all their signatures at the conveyance? and where are they to be got? but if you could get them, would they all sign? perhaps not, could we compel them to sign? Dr. Coke. No, you can do nothing without their leave, the sole power rests with them. Upon this one of the preachers observed that he thought there might be a clause put into the deed, empowering the Trustees to mortgage or sell, without applying to Conference. (What an absurdity!)

E. Coates. If the deed to Conference be a proper assignment, I cannot conceive how the Trustees could have a power to sell without their concurrence, but if the Trustees have really such a power, independent of the Conference, then the deed to Conference must be of no force. It was answered, some of our Chapels are settled in that manner. E. Coates. Surely no premises can be assigned twice over, without all parties concerned join in the conveyance. But I see this Conference plan is big with ambiguity, and may be attended with very disagreeable consequences to us, if we be concerned with it; pray what is the intention of it? what is aimed at by it? Dr. Coke. All that we want by it is, *the use of the Pulpit*. E. Coates. Well that you have already, and ever shall while you make a proper use of it. But why cannot this be secured to you without assign-

ing the whole of the premises to you? Dr. Coke. We have a right to the premises, and we will have them; I see you want to cheat Mr. Wesley out of his right. E. Coates. Mr. Wesley's right, Sir; upon what right does Mr. Wesley ground his claim? Dr. Coke. We have a right to them, and if you do not give them up, we will sue you for them in chancery, and ruin you. E. Coates. That will be very expensive, and a shameful waste of money. Dr. Coke. We do not regard that, 2 or £3000 is no object with us, if you do not give them up, I say, we will ruin you, you cannot stand a law suit with us!!!

This speech of the Dr's. astonished the Trustees, and one of them (J. P.) said to him, what then, are you laying claim to our house? has Mr. Wesley, or any of his preachers, contributed any money towards it? No, not a penny, and yet they are claiming it as their property! I never heard of any thing so unreasonable! Dr. Coke. You then mean to make private property of it,—a dissenting meeting house of it. I suppose you mean to cheat us. E. Coates. Indeed Dr. we never intended it for any thing else than a Methodist preaching house, for the use of ourselves, under the ministry of Mr. Wesley and his preachers; and to convince you of our sincerity, (with the leave of my friends the Trustees) I will make you an offer of the premises, that will be worth your acceptance, and finally settle the dispute. The whole of the premises have cost £800, there are premises, besides the Chapel, worth £25 per annum; our subscription money will amount to £150, this sum deducted from £800, there will remain £650. Now we will sell you the whole of the premises, or assign them over to whom you please, upon your agreeing to pay us the £650, and further you may pay it by instalments, in the course of three years, during which time we will pay the interest of the remaining debt, and the expence of keeping the Chapel also. I make you this offer for two reasons, 1st. To convince you of the purity of our intentions in building the Chapel, and 2nd. that we may see an end to these contentions about it, which, if continued much longer, will in the end, I fear, destroy every thing that is good amongst us. To this the Dr. answered, by repeating what he had so often said before, that they would have it without *one shilling's* charge, or they would spend 2 or £3000 upon it in law, which would ruin us in the end.

E. Coates. I wish I had known sooner of the use you put poor people's money to; I assure you, Sir, you should have had much less from me, than you have had. I never thought that the Conference had such plenty of money, or that they expended it in such vile purposes. We commonly were told that they employed the money in carrying on of the gospel; but it now appears to be employed in carrying on vile contentious law-suits with those generous men who have built Chapels, and that for the purpose of getting those Chapels, and making them *their own property*, but leaving the incumbrance of the debt and expences to the Trustees, as the only part of their property they are fit to be entrusted with. This is worse than giving a house away. Dr. Coke then called E. Coates a knave, and a cheating fellow, and threatened him with the displeasure and censure of Mr. Wesley. E. Coates to Dr. Coke. You, Sir, are the first person that ever called me a knave and a cheat to my face, I will not suffer you, nor any other person, to call me such names with impunity, I therefore must insist on your either making your assertions good, or retracting them. Dr. Coke. You are cheating Mr. Wesley and the Conference out of their property. E. Coates. This is a point you have often asserted, and have as often been called upon to make it good, but you have not done it as yet, nor can you do it, and therefore you are slandering a character better than your own. I insist upon it, you shall either make your charges good, or retract the same, or you shall go out of this house. The Dr. then insisted on Mr. Wesley's having a just right to every shilling of the property that any of the members of his Society possessed, and that it was the duty of every such member to give implicit obedience to his orders, *let them be whatever they might*. E. Coates. I believe it is not generally known that Mr. Wesley pretends to claim the property of his friends: but, for my part, I am determined to resist such claim:—And further, I believe Mr. Wesley to be a great and good man, yet I presume he is not infallible, and therefore he might order some things to be done, which are not proper for a christian to do; in such a case his orders ought not to be complied with, lest they should sin against God. Dr. Coke. It is no matter to you, whether Mr. Wesley's orders be right or wrong, you have no business with that, *it is your duty to*

obey him. E. Coates. You quite astonish me! I think the *Pope* himself cannot go beyond that. But, I assure you, I shall think it my duty to follow no man any further than he follows Christ.

Dr. Coke. I believe my duty is to do as I have said, or I would burn my Bible, and turn Deist. The preachers endeavoured to convince the Dr. he was wrong, but he would not hear them speak. After a great deal of bluster and noise the whole of the company left the Dr. and E. Coates to themselves. The Dr. then grew calm, and apologizing for his heat, took his leave, and returned to Newcastle.

From this time nothing particular happened, till May, when Mr. Wesley came to Newcastle. Mr. Wood being afraid of reflections from Mr. Wesley, was now very desirous to have the house settled, by giving a *bond* to Conference, that we would settle the house on their plan at a limited time. At the same time we were given to understand, that if we did not comply, and give up the house immediately, Mr. Wesley would not come near us, but spend all his time with the opposition party, and take the preachers from us, and then our ruin would be inevitable; and to this purpose Mr. Wood wrote to us, and we answered as follows:

May 16th, 1788.

Mr. Wood,

Sir, I am desired by my friends, the Trustees, to inform you, that we have no other answer to give to your question, than, that we are fully resolved to continue as we are at present. With my kind love and respects to Mrs. Wood, I am, with great respect and esteem,

Your friend and servant,

E. Coates.

P. S. If you should come down with Mr. Wesley, when he goes to Mr. Reed's, your North Shields friends will be glad to give you and your friends every accommodation in their power.

Mr. Wesley came to North Shields, preached in Mr. Reed's house at twelve o'clock, had a very small congrega-

gation, and it was said he was sadly mortified at it, but especially when it was said, none of the Society at Millbourn place were hearing him. How it happened I never could learn, but he sent us word, that, if we chose it, he would drink tea at the rooms belonging to Millbourn place Chapel, and preach in the said Chapel in the evening. We accepted the offer, and entertained him and his friends at the said rooms. A little before preaching it was observed that the Chapel was filling very fast, and that in a little time there would not be a seat, or even room to stand, to be got in it. On this account, E. Coates was applied to by Mr. Wood to secure seats for some ladies, who had drank tea with Mr. Wesley: he accordingly went into the Chapel, and finding some seats in the singing pew not yet taken up, he desired George Thorp (a person who looked after the singers) to preserve those seats, that he might accommodate *the Ladies* with them; at this instant, a person (J. S.) of Newcastle, sitting upon the treble seat in the said Pew, called out pretty loud, You must not sing any thing here, Mr. Wesley sings his own tunes. To this, E. Coates replied, pray Mr. J. S. keep your temper, I know as well as you can tell me, that Mr. Wesley sings his own tunes. We do not mean in the least to give Mr. Wesley any interruption,—he may sing what he pleases. At the same time a Mr. Banks, who was in the said pew, started up and said, I suppose I have no business here: Well, any place will serve me. E. Coates replied, pray Mr. Banks keep your seat; I beg you will not disturb yourself, there is room enough for all who want it. Mr. Banks then said, No, I will not stop here. E. Coates then said, well then Mr. Banks take a seat in this pew, (pointing to one adjoining) there is some room in it.

I then got the ladies to their seats. This *circumstance in the singing pew ought* to be kept in mind, as it will be alluded to hereafter. I shall in this place only observe, that Messrs. Wood, Hunter, and many others, were witnesses of all that passed on this occasion. This Mr. Banks, to whom I shewed so much civility, was vile enough to spread a report, that I took him by the shoulders, and turned him out of the said *singing pew*; and also those ladies whom I took so much pains to accommodate, joined with Mr. Hunter, in spreading a report, that I spoke most disrespectfully of

Mr. Wesley, before the whole congregation, respecting his singing and preaching. Nothing could be more false.

Mr. Wood had given us to understand that Mr. Wesley would meet the Trustees after preaching, upon the business of settling the Chapel. Mr. Wesley preached from the 33rd. Psalm, 1st. Verse, and immediately after preaching left the Chapel, without speaking a word to any of us. Mr. Wood then called a meeting of the Trustees, and told them, that Mr. Wesley had left the business of the Chapel to him, and he must have it done without further delay, for Mr. Wesley would be put off no longer.

There being a great many strangers present, and the rooms thronged with them, E. Coates told Mr. Wood that he thought the business had better be put off till a more convenient time, especially as Mr. Wesley was not present; for we wished to do the business with himself. Mr. Wood replied, *he was* appointed to see the business done, and therefore would insist on having it done. As for the strangers present, he wished them all to stay, and hear and see what was done. E. Coates. But why this exceeding great haste? our Trustees are not all here, and it will not be proper to do the business without them; and also, we think ourselves very coolly treated by Mr. Wesley's going away so very abruptly, after having promised us a meeting. Mr. Wood. It is plain you do not mean to settle the house. E. Coates. Indeed Sir, I think it cannot be expected that we should be very free to do it, when it is considered how ill we have been used. Mr. Wood. I now clearly see you want to make a *dissenting meeting house* of it, and that has been your design from the beginning. E. Coates. Mr. Wood will you never have done with your slanderous irritating language? There is a number of strangers present, and such assertions as you have now made, are fitly calculated to impress their minds with very unfavourable ideas of us, and our proceedings. *To prevent this*, and also to counteract the designs of our enemies, it will be very necessary for me to give this company a short but proper account of the business from the beginning.

Mr. Wood opposed this, but E. Coates insisting upon it, proceeded to give a brief rehearsal of matters from the beginning, and then said, now friends you see how we have been treated, by their countenancing and joining in

with an opposition against us, and yet they have the effrontery to calumniate us, as if we were the aggressors, and even now in your hearing, Mr Wood tells us, we mean to make this Chapel a dissenting meeting house, and that this has been our design from the beginning. Could we have given a greater proof of our attachment to the Methodist Connexion than we have done, by our continuing in it, notwithstanding the very cruel treatment we have met with from it?

But before we proceed any further in the business, I desire Mr. Wood to prove his assertion, for I deny it, and defy him or any other man to prove it. Mr. Wood. I cannot put off time thus, the business must be done. E. Coates. There shall no business be done till you either prove your words or retract them, or give up your author, if you have any. Mr. Wood. I did not think to have met with this, or I would not have mentioned the thing, but I say nothing but what has been reported. E. Coates. You, Sir, have said that you wished those strangers to be present, that they might hear and see what was done, and you have in their hearing, uttered a vile slander for them to carry away to their respective Societies, and would have us patiently to suffer it; but we will not suffer it so to pass. We have been too passive in matters of this kind long, and have by our patience given our adversaries many opportunities to insult us, but I think patience has now had its perfect work, it is surely high time for us to stand upon our own defence. I therefore call upon Mr. Wood once more to prove his words. Mr. Wood. It gives me much pain thus to be pressed, you know Mr. Thom (the preacher) what you told me about it. Mr. Thom. Mr. Wood you surprise me! what I said to you, I said it in confidence, and did not expect you would ever speak of it again! Mr. Wood. You see Mr. Thom I could not do otherwise. Mr. Coates has stopped the business, and I was under the necessity of giving you up. E. Coates. Well! Mr. Thom, pray how came you by the knowledge of this matter? Mr. Thom. What I know of the matter, and what I said to Mr. Wood, I had from Mr. Davison. Mr. Davison. From me, Sir! you had no such thing from me, I remember you once asked me what we would do, if Mr. Wesley should withdraw the Preachers? I answered, there was no fear but

we might get preachers if he should do so. Was this saying that we meant to make a dissenting meeting-house of it? Mr. Thom replied, that what he heard from Mr. Davison, he related to Mr. Wood, and that it had been construed to mean, that we had intended it for an independent Chapel. E. Coates then addressed the company and said, Brethren you now see what this charge of Mr. Wood's is come to, and you will also see the propriety of searching such things to the bottom, for if this had not been done in the present case, you might have gone away prejudiced against us, as enemies to the Methodist economy and connexion; and I will venture to assert, that *all* the other reports which have been spread abroad, representing us in this light, are equally unfounded.

Mr. Wood then desired that we might proceed to business. E. Coates desired Mr. Wood to explain the business, and to give it us in writing, and also to allow us a limited time to consider of it, and more especially so, as some of the Trustees were absent, who ought all to be perfectly acquainted with the business. Mr. Wood opposed, and urged Mr. Wesley's orders for having the business finally settled; but several of the strangers present urging the reasonableness of E. Coates's request, Mr. Wood was so obliging as to comply with it, and promised to send E. Coates the articles in writing. Thus the meeting with Mr. Wood ended. A few days after, we received the following lines from Mr. Wesley.

Sunderland, May 31st, 1788.

My dear Brethren,

All that you desire, (unless I mistake) is the very thing that I desire and design to do. I desire that your house shall be just as the other, and our preachers shall meet the Society, hold Love-feasts, and keep watch-nights in them alternately. If in any thing I should give the preference to either, certainly I would to the house in Millbourn place. What do I want, but to do you all the good I can in my few remaining days? We have loved one another long,

and God forbid that any thing should now part you and your

Affectionate Brother,

John Wesley.

A few days after this we had a meeting with Mr. Wesley at Newcastle.* There were present on his side, Messrs. Smith, Wood, Hunter and Batson. On our side, Wm. Todd, E. Coates, and John Patterson. Mr. Wesley opened the meeting with a short prayer, Then E. Coates, (to Mr. Wesley) Sir, we are informed that you mean to withdraw the preachers from us. Mr. Wesley. Not while you keep your doors open to receive us. E. Coates. Sir our doors were never shut against you or your preachers, nor ever will, so long as they conduct themselves with decency and propriety. Mr. Wesley. Well, so long as you keep your doors open to receive us, I will take care you shall not want preachers. Mr. Hunter. (to E. Coates) Why do you not settle your house on the Conference Plan? E. Coates. Why so much haste Mr. Hunter, to get *our* house settled, while the house down the street which was promised to Mr. Wesley as a gift; is neither given to Mr. Wesley, nor settled on the Conference. Mr. Wesley. (to E. Coates) You have no business with that house; I will hear nothing about it. E. Coates. No Sir, we have no business with that house, further, than as it is made an opposition to us; I remember Sir, you told me at Sunderland, that "that house was to be yours; that they had promised to finish it at their own expence, without a shilling charge to you or any belonging to you, and make it to you by a deed of gift, but have they done so? You further said you would drop them if they went from their promise," I suppose they went from their promise long since? Mr. Wesley. You have no business with that house, I say hold your tongue†. E. Coates. I beg your pardon Sir.

* Mr. Wood would not admit of E. Coates to see Mr. Wesley, but on condition that he would say nothing to offend him.

† Here Mr. Wood reminded E. Coates of his promise.

You often told us you had nothing to do with that house, but Mr. Hunter there says, that you had to do with it from the VERY BEGINNING, and that Mr. Reed built it by your order, and also that you have engaged to pay for it!! Mr. Hunter. (to E. Coates) You are a liar Sir, I never said any such thing. E. Coates. What Sir, do you deny it? I say you did say so, before numbers of witnesses,—you said it in Capt. Rawson's parlour; your words were, that you had this day read over all the letters that had passed between Mr. Reed and Mr. Wesley, concerning that house, from the very beginning, and that you found Mr. Reed had done nothing in that affair but by Mr. Wesley's order. From the very beginning that he had Mr. Wesley's orders to build the house, and that Mr. Wesley had engaged to pay Mr. Reed the money the house should cost. Mr. Hunter, (to E. Coates) You are a liar, Sir, you are a liar; I never said any such thing. Mr. Patterson then came forward and said, Mr. Hunter, what will you deny what Mr. Coates has said? You said the same things to me, in our house, that very day that you said it in Mr. Rawson's parlour. Mr. Hunter. (to Mr. Patterson) You Sir! Who are you? Mr. Patterson. Mr. Hunter you will not pretend to say you do not know me. Mr. Hunter. I know nothing of you Sir. Mr. Patterson. Yes, yes, Mr. Hunter you have known me for a long time past, and I have known you. We are old acquaintance, and it is not long since you were at my house. You know you came to see me when I was ill; and we fell into conversation about Mr. Reed's house, and you told me that Mr. Wesley had ordered Mr. Reed to build that house, and that he had engaged, and must pay for it accordingly. Mr. Hunter. (to Mr. Patterson) I know nothing about you Sir. I never said any such thing!! Mr. Patterson then moved across the room, towards Mr. Hunter, and said, I had rather, Sir, that you had slapped me over the face, than to have thus given me the lie, as you have done. I never could have thought it of Mr. Hunter of all folks. Mr. Wesley then called out, hold your tongues. He also said, I never was so rudely treated in my life as I was at Millbourn place, that day I preached there. E. Coates called out amongst all the people in the Chapel, and said, here is Mr.

Wesley come, but he sha'nt have his own way here, we will sing our own tunes, and do as we please, we do not care for Mr. Wesley!! E. Coates. Indeed Sir, it is a mistake; I never treated you with any disrespect in my life, and I cannot recollect any thing that happened at that time that gave rise to such a report. Mr. Wesley. Yes, you did say so, when you were amongst the singers. E. Coates. I do now recollect something that passed there, but it will by no means bear such a construction. The circumstance was this, I was desired to secure some seats for Mrs. Hutton, Mrs. Wood, and others,—I went into the singing pew for that purpose, and as I was desiring a person to keep some seats, Mr. Stakes (who was sitting in the said pew,) turned about to me and said, You must not sing *any* thing here, Mr. Wesley sings his own tunes. I replied, pray Mr. Stakes keep your temper,—I know as well as you can tell me, that Mr. Wesley sings his own tunes. We do not mean to interrupt Mr. Wesley in the least, he may do as he pleases. Mr. Wood then spoke and said, I was standing by Mr. Coates at the time and heard all that passed, which was exactly as Mr. Coates has related it. Mr. Wesley then turned to Mr. Wood and said, how strangely things have been represented, nothing could be more respectful. Mr. Wood then said, are you willing to give Mr. Wesley a bond, that the house shall be settled on the Conference plan. E. Coates. We are persuaded that two houses cannot be supported in North Shields. We therefore think it may be best to let things continue as they are at present for a while longer, to see if we can support the house. Mr. Hunter. You do not mean Mr. Wesley to have any concern in your house then. You mean to make private property of it?

E. Coates. Why so much to do about our house, while the other house remains unsettled. Mr. Hunter. The other house is settled. I have the deeds in my pocket. E. Coates. What do you say!!! You have the deeds of that house in your pocket!!! I say you have not. Mr. Hunter. I say I have, and the house is properly settled, according to the Conference Plan. E. Coates. I say you have no deeds in your pocket, nor is the house settled at all. Mr. Hunter. You are a

liar, the house is settled I say, and I have the deeds in my pocket. E. Coates. Then let us see them if you please. Mr. Hunter. No, I will not let you see them. E. Coates. Good reason for it, because you cannot. You cannot shew what never had any existence. Mr. Batson then said, Mr. Hunter, if you really have any deeds in your pocket, bring them out, and that will end the dispute at once. Mr. Hunter. No, I wont satisfy him so much. E. Coates. I defy Mr. Hunter, or any other man, to shew deeds for that house; there never was a deed belonging to that house, nor can any such thing be properly made. Mr. Wesley then called out, hold your tongues, I'll hear no more about it, —you have no business with that house. He then turned to Mr. Hunter and said, is that business not done then? Mr. Hunter replied in a very soft tone, Mr. Wood and I will go down to North Shields to-morrow, and get it done. Mr. Batson. Oh then the business is not done!!! So then it turns out at last there are no deeds!!! Oh, fie! fie! Mr. Wood said, he believed Mr. Hunter was mistaken in the business; but he would go down with him to-morrow and get it done. Thus ended our interview with Mr. Wesley at Newcastle. As we were coming away, Mr. Batson said to E. Coates, Why did you let these old sinners slip so?—If I had been in your place, I would never have left off, till I had brought old Hunter and Wesley to their knees. E. Coates replied, but you do not consider Mr. Batson, how I was circumstanced,—I was admitted upon my good behaviour. Mr. Smith and Mr. Wood, would not suffer me to come into Mr. Wesley's presence, till I had promised them I would say nothing to offend Mr. Wesley, for they knew I had it in my power to criminate Mr. Wesley, and that most shamefully; and I believe that was the reason why Mr. Wesley did not meet the Trustees at Millbourn place, as he had promised.

A circumstance now follows, that shows the gentlemen in black will not scruple to do any thing, in order to accomplish their mercenary designs. It must be remembered, that the ground we built our Chapel upon was bought by *proxy*. We had employed Mr. John Stake,

of Newcastle, for this purpose. He bought the ground of Mr. Collingwood, in his own and Mr. George Shadforth's name, and the deeds were made to them. But we furnished the money necessary for the purchase, they giving us a writing under their hands, that they acted as our agents only in the business, and would deliver up their trust to us whenever we should demand it. This was a thing generally known, but especially amongst the preachers, and Mr. Wood was particularly acquainted with it. For, on account of the opposition, the Trustees were apprehensive that they would not be able to support the expences of the Chapel, and if so, the premises would have to be sold. They therefore thought that the premises might as well continue in the hands of our agents, till we saw our way more clear, and if it should happen that the premises should have to be sold, it would be a saving of expence to sell them by our agents.

A little before the Conference 1788, Mr. Stake told us he had been applied to by Mr. Wood, who pressed him very much, to make the premises over to the Conference, without the consent or knowledge of the Trustees. Mr. Wood supposing that as Mr. Stake had all the writings in his custody, he might do it whether the Trustees were agreeable or not, and that it would be well to do so, for the sake of preserving peace in the Connexion. To this Mr. Stake replied, that Mr. Wood well knew that he only acted as our agent,—and also that he had obliged himself to give up his trust to the Trustees, whenever they should require it; and this he had done by writing, signed by his own hand,—but if there had been no such writing, he would as soon have lost his right hand, as have been guilty of such a piece of villany.

A little after this conversation was known, E. Coates had some conversation with Mr. Stamp the preacher, upon Mr. Wood's conduct in it, when Mr. Stamp attempting to exculpate Mr. Wood, occasioned E. Coates to say, that it was a vile action, for which he deserved the pillory. At this Mr. Stamp was much offended, and a few days after sent E. Coates the following letter.

Friend Coates,

What you told me respecting the conduct of Mr. Wood, pained my mind not a little. However I determined to ask Mr. Stake respecting it. Accordingly I took the first opportunity. You told me Mr. Wood applied to Mr. Stake in a secret manner, and used all the means and arguments he was capable of, to settle the house on the Conference Plan, unknown to the Trustees, and such conduct deserved the pillory you said. Mr. Stake told me it was at a quarterly meeting, and several persons were present. Mr. Wood understanding that Mr. Stake had bought the ground, and had the right to dispose of the premises as he pleased, asked if he could not settle the house so and so. Mr. Stake said he could not, for he had engaged himself, by putting his hand to a paper, to settle it as he should be directed by the Trustees. When Mr. Wood heard this, not another word was said. This is a just and fair representation of the matter. How unkind and unjust is it to stigmatize the character of Mr. Wood as deserving the pillory. I hope this will prevent you from mentioning the circumstance to the prejudice of Mr. Wood. I have always thought, as a society, you have been exceedingly ill used, yet this will not exculpate you in doing or speaking that which is wrong.

I am, yours, &c,

John Stamp.

To this letter E. Coates sent the following answer.

Mr. Stamp,

Dear Sir. Your's of yesterday I have before me, and having considered its contents, I beg leave to say, that it plainly appears Mr. Wood did make application to Mr. Stakes to make the premises over to Conference, and that his application was *secret* with respect to us, and that the arguments he made use of, were such as occasioned Mr. Stake to say (in his relating the matter to us) "he was *desired* and *pressed*

to *comply*. Whoever were present they were undoubtedly Mr. Wood's confidants," and it is also plain Mr. Wood intended to have acted Sheriff Hutton with us, and if such swindling work as this does not deserve the pillory, pray what does?

But did not Mr. Wood know, that Mr. Stake was employed by Mr. Wood and me to buy the ground, and that he only acted as our agent? Why then would Mr. Wood tempt Mr. Stake to break his trust? But if Mr. Stake had not obligated himself to deliver up the premises to us by his own hand writing, would he have acted the part of an honest man, if he had complied with Mr. Wood's request? Surely not. What! does he that teaches, Thou shalt not steal, Tempt his brother to commit fraud? These are such base practices as will stigmatize the characters of all such as are guilty of them, and certainly are very inconsistent with the uprightness and honesty required by the Gospel in the conduct of its preachers.

My dear Sir, do you and every honest man in the connexion bear testimony against such vile practices,—reprove them,—tell them, that it a shame even to mention the things that are done among them in secret,—set them a good example by doing things honest in the sight of all men, and giving yourself up to prayer for the church and preaching of the word.—If you can use any innocent guile to catch sinners, and bring them to Christ, use it. But never use guile to catch people's property. I wish both you and them very well, and it will always give me pleasure to hear of a reform in the things complained of.

Yours, affectionately,

E. Coates.

Matters now rested till the Conference came on at London 1778, when a person called Peter Mills was appointed to be our assistant preacher, with Joseph Thomson and John Stamp. The first time he came to Millbourn place, he took care to be too late for the forenoon preaching, but just as the service was ending, he got upon the pulpit stairs, and called out

to the congregation, I will preach in the low house after dinner, and in the evening also. This was purposely done, to get our congregation to follow him to the low house, but it had no such effect. Afterwards he called out again, I will meet the Trustees and Leaders;—we went into the vestry, and he there told us he had an order from Mr. Wesley to leave off our *singing* and *chanting*. E. Coates desired him to explain the matter, and say what he meant by chanting. He said he knew nothing more about it, but that Mr. Wesley would not allow any such thing, and that we must immediately give it up, or he would not come near us any more. E. Coates desired there might be time allowed to consider of the matter. He said, we might take time till he came round again, and give him an answer. E. Coates asked him to dine with him, and he accepted the invitation. On the monday evening he preached at Millbourn place. After sermon he told the people, that he had an order from Mr. Wesley to leave off our *singing* and *chanting*, and that if we did not give it up, he would not come near us,—he then read a paper twice over, which he said was Mr. Wesley's orders for what he was doing. He afterwards exclaimed what do you say? Am I to come any more? Will you obey Mr. Wesley or not? You that are for Mr. Wesley, and the leaving off the singing, hold up your hands. E. Coates being in the pulpit, desired the people to be still. Peter Mills then called out, I hope there are more folks here for Mr. Wesley and the preachers, than there is for Mr. Coates and Mr. Todd.—What do you say friends? Am I to come any more? Do you mean for Mr. Wesley to have this house? Or Mr. Todd and Mr. Coates to have it? Will you give up the singing or the preaching? Some person called out, we will not give up the singing. The congregation being all confusion and uproar, E. Coates said to him, Oh! Mr. Mills, you have made such a piece of disorder in this Chapel, as was never made in it before. Why did you bring this business up to night? Did you not promise to let it rest till you came round again, and then meet the leaders and Trustees upon it? He then called out to the people.

Oh! if I had as much sense as Mr. Coates, I should have done otherwise than I have done to night; but as I have not so much sense as he, I must do as well as I can. By this time the house was all in an uproar, some calling out, Oh! what a preacher!!! Kick him down stairs: others called, turn him out, set him about his business.

In the midst of this uproar, while the congregation was going away, and the noise so great, that he could scarce be heard, he said, let us pray. But there was no regard paid to his praying. E. Coates told him, he was very sorry, and quite ashamed for what had been done, and that he should think himself under the necessity of apologizing to the congregation the first opportunity he had. Mills replied, he had only done his duty, in obeying Mr. Wesley's orders, and he did not care what followed.

On the Sunday evening following, E. Coates expressed his concern and sorrow for what had happened to the Society, and observed to them, Mr. Wesley must have been wrong informed respecting the singing; for it could not reasonably be supposed, that a person of Mr. Wesley's good understanding, would cast off a Society because they sung a little better than common. But most likely an adversary had given Mr. Wesley some strange and ridiculous account of it, purposely to widen the breach, that they might get better forward with the opposition. P. Mills immediately wrote to Mr. Wesley that we would not give up the singing, and Mr. Wesley gave orders for the preachers to withdraw from us. Then Mr. Smith was so kind as to write Mr. Wesley a proper account of our singing, and the manner in which our service was conducted in Millbourn place. E. Coates also wrote to Mr. Wesley to the same purpose, and upon this he gave orders for the preachers to return. Of this order we were advised by Mr. Smith as follows:

Newcastle, Nov. 14th, 1787.

Dear brother Coates,

I have this morning had an

interview with Mr. Mills, who I find intends preaching at Millbourn place on Sunday morning. As you did not expect him, I drop you this hint, that you may not be surprized at his coming: I incline to think he will come among you in a better spirit than when he was with you.

Your's,

Wm. Smith.

On the same day E. Coates received the following lines from Peter Mills.

Newcastle, Nov. 4th, 1788.

Sir.

It does appear from a letter to Mr. Smith from Mr. Wesley, that Mr. Wesley has been misinformed about the chanting; he thinking that you chanted the psalms at large, as they do in the large churches in England. But being fully persuaded that your chanting is far more decent than theirs; and secondly, that it is but a small part of the prose you chant. I shall preach at Millbourn place on Sabbath evening as usual. —But I know not I can be there at ten. Lord, send us peace and assurance of rest for ever.

Peter Mills.

In my letter to Mr. Wesley on the singing business, I took notice of the reasons Peter Mills gave for his proceedings in it, which were, that he knew no other reason for it than Mr. Wesley's humour.

Mr. Wesley sent me the following answer.

My dear brother,

My humour was as much out of the question as my stature; my objection to the *chanting*

the psalms was, we have no such thing; it is an unprecedented thing among the Methodists. But when I was informed they were not the reading psalms which were chanted, but only the hymns in the morning and evening service, my objections of course fell to the ground. But as this little dispute is now at an end, there will be no need of saying any more, only that courtesy and brotherly love require it.

I am, your affectionate Brother,

John Wesley.

Why those gentlemen chose to give our singing the name of chanting, I cannot tell; unless it was intended as a term of reproach; for they (the preachers) always spoke of it in a ludicrous manner, and upon this single simple article, they said and reported many shameful, impious, and ridiculous things, and by it pretended a reason to quarrel with us. When I reflect upon their behaviour, in this and many other occasions, I am very much surprized that we had patience to suffer their *insults*, *rudeness* and *impiety*, so long as we did. This little *shabby* affair of the singing being now cleared up and settled, we fully expected, what we had long wished for, and laboured for, namely to be *permitted* to live in peace. But we might truly say, we did not *even then know the men* we had to do with; for when we spoke of peace, they prepared for war; and thus it turned out, for this affair was settled in the middle of November, and before the month was out, Mr. Wesley sent orders the second time, for the preachers to withdraw from us; and that without any further delay, because some person or persons had sent him a fresh list of charges against us.

1st. Charge. They say they never will come into the Conference plan. 2nd. That Mr. Wesley and his preachers should not have any rule over them, nay, not so much as to be suffered to appoint stewards, or leaders,—if they chuse to give them a sermon, it is well, but nothing more. 3rd. E. Coates made free with Mr. Wesley's reputation at a meeting of the Society, looking upon him as a superannuated old man, and a

juggler. 4th. They refuse to omit service in the forenoon, when the sacrament is administered in the Parish church.

In answer to these charges let it be observed, with respect to the first: We never said we would not come into the Conference plan. But if the settling of the house on the Conference plan be here meant, we answer, that if they had not carried on an opposition against us, our house would have been settled on that plan without any hesitation; for we repeatedly told them, that if they would give up the opposition, our house should *be so settled*; but they never would agree to it, but always told us, it was not our place to dictate, but to obey their orders. Concerning the second charge, we never said or did any thing like it. The third charge is equally false, as will appear in another place; namely, when we come to the next quarter day's business. With respect to the fourth charge, we have to say that the forenoon service was imposed on us by the Conference, contrary to our inclinations; but we submitted to it, lest our refusal should have given them opportunity to quarrel with us, for they seemed to seek occasion for so doing; and no doubt this was done to ensnare us. We let them begin and carry on the service as they thought proper, but we soon saw that it would answer a very good purpose, and we therefore grew fond of it;—but they no sooner perceived this, than they began to speak against it, sometimes saying, we interfered with the church, and at other times they called us dissenters; telling the congregation that we were not a Methodist Society, but a company of dissenters; and if we did not give up the forenoon service they would leave us.

About this time they reported, that Mr. Wesley had given orders to discontinue the forenoon service at Millbourn place, on the monthly Sundays, on account of the sacrament at the Parish church. But this was never properly proposed to us, and perhaps for this very reason, *lest we should have complied* with it, and then they would have been disappointed in their aim, which was to widen the breach and make us fly off,—for they had now lost all hopes of getting our house,

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and were determined therefore to ruin it if possible, that the opposition might be better supported; and to this end they wished us *rather to fly off*, than that they should *leave us*; and in that case they fully expected the congregation, and the greatest part of the Society to follow them to the other house; and to accomplish their point, they frequently told the people how much they were concerned for their welfare, and what pain it gave them to think what would become of them, if the preachers should be forced to leave them. Some of the preachers would shed tears in the pulpit, and exclaim, Oh! the precious souls that must perish at Millbourn place if we leave it!! Ah! for God's sake consider the value of souls, and give up the house, and thereby prevent the gospel from being taken away from you. The blood of all the souls that shall perish for want of the gospel, God will require at the hands of the Trustees, &c.

But this whining cant and hypocritical crying, had no other effect upon us, than to convince us that the men who talked in this manner, were themselves most insincere, and were even then, giving the most undeniable proofs, that they preferred the *property* of the Chapel, to the *saving all the souls* that came to it. But whatever might be the dreadful consequence of this leaving Millbourn place Chapel, they themselves were the cause of it. Mr. Wesley having been told that Mr. Wm. Smith had greatly opposed his orders for withdrawing the preachers from Millbourn place, and that he was very intimate with E. Coates, he wrote Mr. Smith to the following effect.

Dear Billy,

How is this? Do you owe E. Coates money, or does he owe you money, that you will not break off with that Rogue, that Knave that is cheating me out of my property? I insist upon your never darkening his doors more, or renounce all connection with your brother, *John Wesley*. And at the same time give positive orders for the preachers to be withdrawn from Millbourn place.

This put Mr. Smith and some others upon writing to Mr. Wesley, and stating things in a proper way, and at the same time declaring that the list of charges against us were false and malicious. They also begged to be informed of the authors. Upon this Mr. Wesley was so condescending, as to send the letter containing the charges to Mr. Smith, and they were read the next quarter day. By those letters it appeared that Peter Mills was the author of those charges,—Dr. Watson was the writer of them,—and two bad characters belonging to the opposition signed the letters; as witnesses of the truth of the charges.

On the 16th, of December 1788, E. Coates wrote Mr. Wesley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

Do you still wish to do us all the good you can? If so, wherefore do you withdraw the Preachers from us? Is it because some person or persons that lurk in the dark, whose actions will not bear the light, have sent you a list of charges against us, which charges we deny; and beg that we may have the privilege of Englishmen granted us, to look our adversaries in the face,—and that this may be done before any person or persons you may please to appoint to hear and judge the case? It has been a great misfortune to us all along, that we have not been allowed to know our accusers; nor any proper opportunity given us, to clear ourselves of the many slanderous accusations brought against us; and while such wicked persons are screened, what prospect can there be of peace to this unhappy Society, which has been labouring in the fire for these three years? And can we give a greater proof of our firm attachment to the Methodist connexion, than we have given for these three years past in our standing firm to you and the cause, notwithstanding all the opposition and base treatment that we have met with? But what is meant by the breaking up this Society, (as it is termed)? Is it not to serve and strengthen the opposition? It is now clearly seen, that opposition cannot long maintain its ground, if we

abide in the connexion; and therefore we are to be *sacrificed* to support that vile cause!! And will you assist in this vile and wicked business? Will you cast off old tried friends to serve new ones? Is it right to do evil that good may come? Which good may never come, but the evil is certain. You say, But we will not give up the house? I answer, you know we have proposed to give up the house, on condition of the opposition house being given up,—but without that we cannot, consistently with prudence and common sense, give it up. But have you not the sole use of the premises? And that without any or the least interruption? You know you have! And what would you have more? Is the assigning the premises to you and your successors for ever, necessary to our being saved? Is it necessary to the success of the gospel? Is this really the final condition on which you will preach the gospel to us? Dear Sir, we pray you to consider these premises, and may God give you a right judgment in all things.

Mr. Wesley's answer to the above, is as follows:

London, Decr. 1788.

My dear brother,

I have all my life been a lover of peace, and am not less so now than I was fifty years ago. Therefore as to warm words spoken to you, or any other, let them pass, they are not worth rehearsing. There is only one charge which is of consequence, that you will not settle the house on the Methodist plan. This is exactly the case of the Dewsbury house, and if you persist in the resolution, you will constrain us to proceed in the same manner.

I am, your affectionate Brother,

John Wesley.

About this time E. Coates received a letter from Mr.

Cownley who was then at Edinburgh, and had been informed of our treatment by Mr. Smith and some other persons. He writes.

My dear friend,

I have felt much pain of mind lately for my old steady friends at North Shields. Why you are suffered to be so tried, nobody can tell now, but we shall know hereafter. How true is that saying of St. Paul's, *Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye may receive the promise.* Since I heard of your late treatment, I for the first time wrote my mind, without reserve, to Mr. Wesley about you, and I hope it has had some good effect. When Mr. Reed was here some time since, he told one of our friends he expected Millbourn place would be given up by such a day, and of this I suppose he had been informed while he was here. He wondered he said, that I never enquired of him about the Chapel at North Shields, but as I knew we should not agree, and as I had no mind to quarrel with him before strangers, I cautiously avoided it.

Your's affectionately,

James Cownley.

Also about this time Captain Lawson brought from London Dr. Coke's statement of Dewsbury house; concerning which it appears, that because the Trustees of the New Chapel there, had refused to settle it on the Conference plan, Mr. Wesley had withdrawn the preachers, and also, that Mr. Atley had in consequence thereof, gone to them; for which conduct, the pious Dr. had joined Mr. Atley and the Devil together in partnership, to destroy the work of God,—therefore the work of God, according to the Dr's. sentiments, is the getting houses made over to the Methodist Preachers, without any expence or risk to them, not even so much as the expence of the deed of conveyance, nor the least repair of the premises!! As for the expences of keeping a

house in repair, the first cost of a house, and every other expence necessary for its support, those never go from the Trustees, but remain with them, even after they have assigned over the house to the preachers, as the only part of the business they are fit to be entrusted with.

The Dr's. statement came very seasonably, at a time when we were in great uneasiness of mind on account of the preachers being withdrawn. But upon reading that statement, we thought as Mr. Atley had been so good as to go to Dewsbury, he might also be so good as to come to North Shields, or recommend some person to us, or at least he would give us his advice how to proceed. E. Coates therefore wrote to him as follows :—

Mr. Atley,

Dear Sir. Although you and I are strangers to each other, yet having heard of your faith and virtue in the Lord, I make free to beg your assistance and advice upon circumstances that follow: Mr. Wesley has at last given final orders for his preachers to withdraw from this Society of 90 members, with a very good new Chapel, and every reasonable convenience, this has been brought about singly by our assistants joining in with Dr. Watson and his schemes. As we had no other design in building our Chapel, than that it should be a place to worship God in, so we are not willing to put it to any other use; and having seen by a publication of Dr. Coke's, that you are at a place in the like circumstances, we make free to state our case. We should be glad to form a connexion with you, if it can be brought about, and be agreeable. We have borne a long series of troubles, and have done every thing in our power to preserve peace and unity, except in this last demand of Mr. Wesley's; namely, the giving up of our house to Conference,—but even this would most certainly have been given up without any reluctance, if Mr. Wesley and his preachers had not encouraged an opposition against us. Your answer

will much oblige my friends, and your friend and servant,

E. Coates.

Here follows Mr Atley's answer.

Dewsbury, Dec. 23rd, 1788.

My dear Sir,

Your letter came safe to hand this morning; and from it I hear that you have had sorrow enough, and really and truly I feel for you.—I never knew a congregation of people suffer so much as the congregation in this place, and after the preachers had afflicted them for more than 12 months, they left them without a preacher, and threatened to put any preacher out of the connexion that should go and preach to them. It was at the time of their distress, that I gave up my place in London, (and nearly an income of £300 a year) and came to their assistance, where I neither expect nor desire more than the necessaries of life, and to do them all the good I can. If the preachers have left you, and you desire it, I will come over and stay some weeks with you, and we can then consult further what is to be done, but you may depend on it, I can supply you with preachers and men of God,—who are as much dissatisfied with the manners of Conference as you or I. But now you must attend to those following particulars: 1st, I will not come unless the preachers are gone. 2nd, I will not come unless you are unanimous in being connected with us. 3rd, I will not come unless you are Methodists on our first principles,—I am no Calvinist nor Dissenter, nor can I form a connection with those that are. With respect to your temporals I never give them a thought,—I am sure I shall have all that I want. I cannot say more at present, only do not give up your house to the Conference. Pray much, and pray for your truly affectionate,

John Atley.

The many letters sent Mr. Wesley, by Mr. Smith, Mr. Cownley, E. Coates and some others, upon his last orders to withdraw the preachers, seem to have had some effect upon him, for he wrote to Mr. Smith, and gave orders for them to return back to us, which they did; and towards the latter end of the month I wrote to Mr. Atley, in answer to his of December 23rd, 1788.

Mr. Atley,

Dear Sir. I thank you for your kind favour on the 23rd, Inst. Our preachers have taken their word again, and now preach with us as they did before, telling us they hope things will be made up to the satisfaction of all parties; but of this we have no hope.—I incline to think they only want to amuse us, till they see a better opportunity than has yet offered, to withdraw; for they doubtless expected that the greatest part of the Society would follow them, but in this they have repeatedly seen their mistake; for to all appearances we are too firmly united to give them reasons for any hopes of success. They have made many attempts to divide us,—they have tried to dis-affect the people against the Trustees, stewards and leaders; but the reproach due to such vile practices has always fallen on their own heads. We are not willing to put them away, although they have done a great deal to provoke us to do it. This is the fourth time they have given us up, and come back again, which may be partly owing to the disappointment they have met with, in not getting the society to follow them, and also to Mr. Smith's interposition, for he (good man) has done every thing in his power to preserve an union, and prevent a separation.

But Mr. Wesley's orders must be complied with at last, and we are determined not to give up our house; so that a separation must take place ere long, and as soon as that happens I will let you know.

We are Methodists according to the first principles, and desire to continue such,—I know of no difference between us and the Methodist Societies in general,

excepting that we have the church service read in our Chapel every Sunday forenoon. This was imposed upon us by the Conference; but we now esteem it a great privilege, as we are mostly members of the Church of England, and our Parish church being at a great distance, and being by no means large enough to hold the parishioners, we really think it has been attended with very good effects, in bringing a good number of serious people together, at that time, who could not go with so much satisfaction to any other place of public worship.

I am, your most obliged Brother, &c.

E. Coates.

Matters now rested till the next quarter day, when the business of the list of charges sent Mr. Wesley came on. Mr. Smith read Mr. Wesley's letter, wherein he calls Mr. Coates a Rogue, a Knave and a Cheat, and required Mr. Smith to break off all connection with him. This warmth in Mr. Wesley's letter against E. Coates, seems to have been occasioned by something in the letter sent to Mr. Wesley with the list of charges. Mr. Smith therefore asked Peter Mills if he had not written something concerning E. Coates and the people at Millbourn place, to Mr. Wesley, and desired to know what it was. Peter Mills answered, the meeting had no business with what he did; and then left the meeting. Mr. Smith followed, and brought him back. The preachers insisted on Mills answering the question that Mr. Smith put to him; but he still refused, and said, nobody there had any right to call him to any account, and left the room the second time. He was again brought back by force, but still refused to answer, saying, he was accountable to none but Mr. Wesley. Mr. Smith then *produced* the letter containing the charges, which letter was signed by Peter Mills as the writer, and by Joseph Fothergale and Ralph Watts, as witnesses and vouchers for the truth of the contents. Mills denied the letter as his. Fothergale was asked how he came to sign the letter as a witness, and what

he knew of the truth of the contents? At this, Peter Mills called out to Fothergale, hold your tongue Joseph, you have no business to speak, they have no right to ask you any questions. This made the company very pressing upon Fothergale to speak; and there being some appearances of Fothergale's being about to comply, Mills jumped up, and CLAPPED his hands before Fothergale's mouth, and said,—you shall not speak,—I insist upon it, they have no right to make you speak, nor can they, if you hold your tongue. Fothergale was then threatened to be put out of the Society, if he did not speak as required. Mills then said, they have no power to hurt you Joseph, I'll stand between you and all danger. Mr. Smith then said, Mr. Coates, there is one of those charges which particularly belongs to you. You are accused of having called Mr. Wesley an old superannuated man, and a juggler, and that from your pulpit,—what do you say to this charge? E. Coates. I deny it, and say, whoever has said it, is a liar and a slanderer. At this Mr. Thomson called out, Mr. Mills, do you hear that? Do you hear what brother Coates says?—he denies the charge. P.M. I do not care what he says, none of you have any business with me. E. Coates. I say if Mr. Mills is the author of that charge, he is a liar and a slanderer, I defy him or any other man to prove any such thing. P. Mills. I don't care what you say. Mr. Thomson. What! a preacher of the gospel accused of lying and slandering, and yet says he does not care, nor do any thing to clear himself of the scandal!!! Shocking!!! Oh infamous man! What a conscience must you have!!!

At this Mills left the room a third time. E. Coates then addressed Ralph Watts, and said, Mr. Watts, your name is at this letter as a witness. Pray did you ever hear me call Mr. Wesley an old superannuated man and a juggler? Watts answered, you have no business with what I do. I have nothing to say to you. E. Coates. Yes Sir, I have business with you, you set your name to that letter as witness to a lie, and thereby slander your neighbour! Richard Watts. I do not care what you say. E. Coates. What, are you like Peter Mills? Do you care nothing for your character. Ralph

Watts. No, I do not care what you say of me. E. Coates. Well Sir, if you have no regard for your own character, I cannot suppose you will have any for that of your neighbours. You are a pretty man for a religious society!!! You are not fit for a civil Society. What! a *Tradesman* and care nothing for his character. This seemed to raise Watts, and he exclaimed, I will not bear the scandal neither for Mr. Mills nor for any body else; and just as they were bringing Mills into the room a third time, Watts clapt his hand upon Mill's shoulder and said, let the saddle be set on the right horse. This is the man that told me that Mr. Coates called Mr. Wesley a superannuated old man and a juggler, and I declare I never heard any one say so but himself. He got Dr. Watson to write the letter, and Joseph Fothergale and I to witness it, but I never heard those charges named by any body but himself. E. Coates. Pray Mr. Watts how could you think of setting your name as a witness to that letter, when you knew nothing of the truth of the contents of it? Watts replied, because Mr. Mills said they were true, and I did not suppose he would tell a lie. The meeting would then insist upon having Mr. Mills tried, but he again told them that they had no business with him; and that he had only done his duty, and was accountable to none but Mr. Wesley. The preachers told him they would not look upon him as a brother, if he did not clear himself or acknowledge his faults. He then said, if they would give him time he would clear himself. Being asked what time he required, he said, he would give them a meeting for that purpose before he left the circuit; and thus the meeting broke up. E. Coates and his friends were far from being satisfied, with the hard and bad words which Mr. Wesley had been pleased to stigmatize him with, in his letter to Mr. Smith and others; therefore E. Coates, by the advice of his friends was determined to pinch Mr. Wesley a little upon this business, in order to make him give up the author of those calumnies, if he had any; and to this end Mr. Coates wrote to Mr. Smith, desiring him, to let him take a copy of the letter he had lately received from Mr. Wesley, in which letter, E. Coates' name is men-

tioned. To this request Mr. Smith returned the following answer.

Newcastle, April 3rd, 1789.

Dear Sir,

My present view of things render granting copies of the letters you mention rather unpleasing, therefore you will readily excuse me. I observe in those letters there is no accusation against you *EXPRESSED*; (save your refusing to settle the house) though some *bad* must be implied, otherwise why should I be required to break off all connexions with you. You heard the letter read, and all I said upon the subject, and you are at liberty to make what use you please of it. I now reflect with pleasure on the testimony I bare against the wickedness of our ungodly Bishop. I wish we may be able to detect the baseness of his conduct, so that truth may be established, and he repent before it is too late. Some of our friends here, think he will find means to evade an interview, and not give us the satisfaction he promised; but if he stays in the circuit, this will be difficult to do; indeed he himself says, he is as deep as a *Lead Mine*. I wonder where the pure metal lies, little has come up yet but rubbish.

William Smith.

While we were busily employed in examining the conduct of our assistant, P. Mills, and some others of the opposition party, Mr. Wesley repeated his orders for the preachers to withdraw from Millbourn place. But when Mills issued out his order, Messrs. Thomson, Stamp and Smith, and several others told him they would not obey it. Mr. Wesley being made acquainted with their refusing to obey his orders, he sent his final orders for all the preachers, (by name) both travelling and local, to withdraw from us, and that immediately, or be excluded the Connexion, unless we would settle the premises on the Conference plan, within a limited

time. Of this Peter Mills gave us notice, in a line to Edward Coates, as follows:

Newcastle, April 20th, 1789.

Mr. Coates,

The following is an extract of a letter from Mr. Wesley.

Dublin, April 11th. 1789.

I require of you Peter Mills, to require of E. Coates within three weeks a positive answer; will you, or will you not settle the house at Millbourn place on the Methodist Plan? If they will not, I further require, that none of you preach in that house more, unless you will renounce all connection with your

Affectionate brother,

John Wesley.

P.S. I am positive. I will be trifled with no more.

P.S. I have sent Mr. Thomson a literal copy which he will no doubt let you see.

P. Mills.

Upon a receipt of this order, a meeting of the Trustees was called, who unanimously resolved, that a letter should be sent to Mr. Wesley, in answer to P. Mill's card, that we would not settle our house on the Conference plan, to be signed by all the Trustees, the 14th, of April, 1789.

E. Coates,

Wm. Todd,

Robert Gray,

James Hudson,

John Patterson,

Wm. Davison,

J. Rawson.

Here follows a copy of the Trustees letter to Mr. Wesley.

North Shields, April 17th, 1789.

Rev. Sir,

For these three years past we have suffered a series of injuries and afflictions from the Methodist Connexion, which we believe were intended by some ill disposed persons, to cause us to fly off from the connexion; but they finding that they could not succeed by such evil practices, it seems they have prevailed upon you to accomplish their *pious* business, of separating this Society from your connexion; and you have accordingly once more given orders for your preachers to withdraw from us; the reason given, is because we will not settle our house on the Conference plan. When we met you at Newcastle last summer, you told us all that you required of us was, that we should keep our doors open to receive your preachers; and you declared if we did so, you would take care that we should be supplied, and the preference be always given to our house. Now Sir, have we ever shut our doors against any of your preachers? We have not, we have even suffered some of them to occupy our pulpit that were very unfit for the place, but this we suffered, as we suffered many other things, for the sake of peace. After having been very ill treated, and looked upon as Rogues, Cheats and Rebels, and swaggered over with all the tyrannical insolence, that a proud, ignorant mind is capable of, when got into a little authority;—We say, after having had such a sample of Conference *piety* and *moderation*, should we not be fools and mad men to settle our house just as our adversaries require? No: we speak now as we have always done, (without guile or dissimulation) that we will not settle our house upon any such plan. It was built with our own money, and we think those persons who are pretending a claim to it, are more worthy of the

epithets of Rogues, Villains, Cheats and Swindlers than
your humble servants,

*John Rawson,
James Hudson,
Wm. Todd,
Robert Gray,
E. Coates,
Samuel Burne,
John Patterson,
Wm. Davidson.*

E. Coates also wrote to Mr. Wesley at the same time, by way of reply to the many bad things he had said of him in his letter to Mr Smith and others.

North Shields, April 17th, 1789.

Rev. Sir,

I was very much surprised at hearing two of your letters to Mr. Smith, read at the last quarter meeting at Newcastle, wherein you are pleased to reproach me as a Rogue and a Cheat, and not fit for an honest man to keep company with. How is all this? You have at sundry times laid very bad things to my charge, and yet you always found those charges false, and my adversaries never dare to look *me* in the face, or make any attempts to prove any one of them! yet you never did me the justice to let me know my accusers. But by your screening these cowardly villains, do you not make yourself a partaker of their sins? For if you did not give them encouragement and protection, they could not persevere in their evil ways. What a pity that the Rev. Mr. Wesley, who has preached so many good sermons, and wrote so many good things against evil-speaking, backbiting and slandering, should make himself the patron of them that do such things! When a person

of your profession speaks evil of a man, it is by many looked upon to be as true as gospel, without ever examining into the case; and as I am a person in business, and in various ways much connected with mankind, there is no saying what injury such reports may do me.

You further accuse me of being the author of all the mischief, that has been at North Shields from the beginning of the dispute. I suppose you mean about the house commonly called *Mr. Reed's* house, if so, I beg leave to say, that all that I have done in the matter, has been all to defend myself and friends against the evil and wicked machinations, of a few evil-designing men, and keep clear of the *reproach of removing my neighbour's land mark*, and being a companion of evil-doers, because I understood the scriptures forbid such things.

Messrs. Reed, Watson and Hunter, all declare that you encouraged that party in all that they have done, even from the very beginning, although you told us at the same time, that you had nothing to do with them!! nor was the mask ever thrown off till I wrote to you in January, 1787. If this be true, you seem, rather than I, to have been the cause of all you speak of!!! And indeed, it is most notorious, that falsehood, double dealing, dissimulation, and even right down bare-faced lying, characterise the business on both sides; i. e. Watson and Co. on the one side, and Mr. Wesley and his preachers on the other. You are very sensible that we have such a proof of this, in Hunter and Mills, as is truly very alarming; and if *these men, with many others*, that we have had to do with, are to be taken as a sample of your Conference, I really think any honest man that knows them, would not choose to have any thing to do with them; and these are your viceroy's, sent to swagger over a few honest *good natured useful men*, with all the ignorance that a proud ignorant mind is capable of, when got into a little authority. What a pity but they had some better employment.

Now if these things be true, (and you know they are true) who has most reason to complain? You, or

the good natured folks at Millbourn place? You have injured our Society. You have done every thing in your power to ruin us, both as a religious and civil society; but pray wherein have I or my friends injured you? If you can make it appear that I have wronged you, or any other man, of your or their property, I will restore four-fold. But you cannot make this appear, and therefore you slander your neighbour. I hope you are not of the opinion of one of your preachers,* who when accused of adultery, answered, he thought himself so much in the favour of God, that nothing *that he did would be looked on as sinful*. Wishing you Reverend Sir, very well, and success in all good things.

I am, your humble Servant,

E. Coates.

Here follows Mr. Wesley's answer to the above letter.

Waterford, April 29th, 1789.

Conference is out of the question, you have used me basely and ungratefully, after I have served you between forty and fifty years; and if I had not two strings to my bow, I should have been in a fine condition. Your letters are a proof of all I say concerning you. If you and the six other persons who sign your letter of the 26th, Inst., issued out all the money, whereby the house at Millbourn place was built, you are honest men, if not, I will not call you so. One of the twelve original rules of Methodism is, "You are to do that part of the work which I appoint," but this cannot be, unless I have a right of appointing the preachers in all the Methodist preaching houses. I am old, and you apparently young, yet you know not which of us will first be called hence. I wish you all well, and am,

Your affectionate Brother,

John Wesley.

G. D.

I

On the 24th of April, 1789. E. Coates wrote to Mr. Atley.

Mr. Atley,

Dear Sir, I would not have been so long in writing to you, but that I expected to have seen Mr. Eels before now; and also, that our affairs respecting the Conference preachers have been in a very unsettled state. Since I wrote to you, Mr. Wesley has given orders, three different times, for the preachers to withdraw from us; his last and final order was received this week. He declares, "whoever comes nigh us, shall be cut off from the connexion." We are therefore now left to ourselves, and shall be very glad to see you or Mr. Eels here as soon as you can make it convenient. As for our trouble it is a very long story, I must therefore defer the particulars of it till I have the pleasure of seeing you, which I hope will not be long. My friends the Trustees join with me in this, and we wish you and your friends peace and prosperity.

E. Coates.

Mr. Atley's answer to the above.

My dear Brethren,

Your long silence led me to conclude that things were easy at North Shields, that Preachers had seen into their folly, and would trouble you no more; but I find it is not so. I am heartily sorry both for you and them, and yet I am glad the strife is so near an end. You will soon have peace in all your borders, and the Lord will lift up your heads. I cannot come to North Shields at present, but will not be long from you. Mr. Eels will come and stay some weeks, after which I will come and stay some time with you; and then we can fix in what way we can serve you. Give my love to all the brethren, I am, my dear brother, . .

Your's most affectionately,

J. Atley.

The account of our affairs having reached Dewsbury, and Messrs. Atley and Eels having told their friends, that they were requested to come to North Shields, and that it was their intention to serve us; this made a great noise in those parts, and Mr. Mather being at Wakefield, took the alarm, and wrote to Mr. Smith and Mr. Mills to stop proceedings, and by all *means not to leave Millbourn place as yet*. He desired Mr. Smith to inform him, if there was any settlement made of the Chapel, and if so, of what nature? How the Trustees were appointed to their office? Was it by Mr. Wesley or otherwise? Was any money collected, and if so, *what kind of words were made use of?* Was it said to build a house for the use of the Methodists in connexion with Mr. Wesley, and to be under his direction? To these questions Mr. Smith answered, and Mather wrote a second letter, in which he says, "It appears to me evident, that the real design in all parties in purchasing and building, *was, that there should be a Methodist preaching house there, for the only use of that body; and as the Trustees were chosen with the approbation of Mr. Wesley, all parties were agreed that that house should be subject to him.*" Upon this Mr. Mather gave a very long comment, and concludes with advising Mr. Smith to "press the Trustees to settle the house immediately, according to his plan; otherwise the Trustees would be guilty of defrauding every person out of his money that had contributed only one shilling towards it!" And further, we were informed that Mr. Mather had discovered, that there was sufficient ground for a chancery suit, "and if we did not comply with his proposal we might be ruined in the end!" To this we answered, Mr. Mather might go to his purpose, and we would defend ourselves. Mr. Mather then wrote a third letter to Mr. Smith, desiring him to tell us, that he must *insist* on our executing a deed, agreeable to the principles he had proposed; but if he found us still averse to this, then to get us to give a *bond*, that we would settle the house at a *future time*, to be mentioned, and he would undertake to reconcile Mr. Wesley. As we saw nothing in any of those letters worthy our attention, and being

fully persuaded that Mr. Mather had a design to draw us into a snare; and if he could not succeed, then to amuse us, in order to prevent Mr. Atley's coming to us; we therefore sent Mr. Smith the following answer :

May 2nd, 1789.

Mr. Wm. Smith.

Dear Sir, You are worthy of great respect and esteem, and I trust we shall always bear a grateful sense of your services to this Society, but the business between Conference and us is finally over. We wrote our minds to Mr. Wesley some time ago. As they have never yet kept their promise with us, but have always taken advantage of our simplicity and confidence, we never mean to put it in their power to treat us with such duplicity again. We wish them well, and forgive them the injuries they have done us. We cast our care upon God, and if our ways please him, he will help us, and if he be for us, we are quite unconcerned who may be against us. I am, dear Mr. Smith, your obliged friend and servant,

E. Coates.

A little after this I received the following card from P. Mills.

May 4th. 1789.

Mr. Coates,

According to your desire, I have appointed to meet you, Mr. Todd, Wm. Davison, and several others at Millbourn place, on Wednesday the 6th, Inst. at 3 o'Clock in the afternoon, on the affair of Dr. Watson's letter.

Peter Mills.

On Wednesday the 6th. of May, 1789. the meeting began at Millbourn place. The persons who composed the meeting were P. Mills, J. Stamp, W. Smith, J.

Stake and Richard Gray, from Newcastle. D. Wright, Wm. Hunter, R. Carner, and S. Robson, from Sunderland. E. Coates, Wm. Todd, Wm. Davidson, Dr. Watson, T. Fothergale, and a few other persons.

Before the business began, Mr. Duncan Wright took Edward Coates aside, and laboured much to impress him with the idea, that if the house was not settled on the Conference plan the Trustees would be ruined; for as the preachers were withdrawn, the Society and Congregation would soon leave the Chapel and follow the preachers. E. Coates told him we expected help from Mr. Atley. He replied, Mr. Atley was an old man, and could not give us much help, that we should find none but the Methodist preachers could keep the congregation and Society to that house. E. Coates replied, that we were determined to put it to the trial. We had been so very ill used, both by Mr. Wesley and his preachers, that we had lost all confidence in them, and were determined never more to put it in their power to treat us as they had done.

When he heard this he turned to the company and said, "come let us away, here's nothing to be done here." Mr. Smith desired him to take his place, and let the business be got forward. Mr. Wright asked, what business? Mr. Smith answered, we are come here to try our assistant for his bad conduct. Mr. Wright then said, what conduct? You have no business with your assistant, nor with what he does, he is not accountable to you for what he does; Mr. Wesley sent him here, and it is your duty to obey him. Mr. Smith replied, what do you say Mr. Wright? Do you mean to say that a preacher is not accountable to his brethren for his conduct? Mr. Wright answered, "No! he is not, he is accountable to none but Mr. Wesley, if Mr. Wesley sends you a *Broom-stick* it is your duty to obey it!" This speech of Mr. Wright's caused a general surprise and disgust, and Wm. Todd called out, a broom-stick man, thou hast made a speech on't naw! a broomstick! I'd put it into the fire and burn it, but indeed that man is not much better than a broom-stick. (meaning P. Mills.) Mr. Smith also expressed his surprise and disgust at what Mr. Wright had said in

very strong terms, and said, What! is Methodism come to this? I think it is time for us all to look about us. A little confusion being raised in the meeting, (perhaps with design) by what Mr. Wright had said, he called out to his friends, "come let us away, for as we can do nothing with respect to the house, we have no business with Mr. Mills, he is Mr. Wesley's agent, and if any one is dissatisfied with him, they must apply to Mr. Wesley for redress." Order being restored, Mr. Smith read Mr. Wesley's letter with the charges sent him by P. Mills, against the people of Millbourn place. While Mr. Smith was reading those letters, he was much interrupted by Mr. Wright, and some other persons, who evidently wanted to confuse the meeting, for the purpose that no business might be done; but Mr. Smith with great firmness, insisted that business should go forwards, and therefore called out, Mr. Coates, you are a person principally concerned in this business, what do you say? You hear Mr. Mills in his letter has told Mr. Wesley, that you reviled him, by making free with his character and reputation, calling him an old superannuated man, and a juggler, in your Chapel, and in the pulpit. I say, what do you say to this? Do you allow it? E. Coates answered, I do not allow it. I deny it. Dr. Watson then spoke and said, Mr. Mills, Sir, read your defence. Mills then got out some papers, and after a great deal of time spent in sorting and arranging them, he began to read, but could not get forward, for not being able to write the matter himself, it had been written by one of his friends, and he could not read the hand. This simple confession of poor Mills's, produced some satirical reflections from some of the company, upon Mr. Wesley's agent, and Mr. Wright's broomstick. Mills then told the company he would give them the *contents* of it without reading, and accordingly set forward and said, "Whenever I came to "Millbourn place, I always gave great attention to what "I heard and saw among the people, and when I went "away got some person to write it down. The first "time I came here being asked to dine with Mr. Coates, "I accepted the invitation, but not so much for the

"sake of the dinner, as to have an opportunity of
 "sounding him, and finding out what sort of a man
 "he was, I therefore asked him several questions respect-
 "ing Mr. Wesley and the Conference plan, and about
 "the settling of the house at Millbourn place, and I
 "found by his answer, that he did not approve of Mr.
 "Wesley's and the Conference's conduct, respecting the
 "disputes at North Shields, and that what he said, in
 "my opinion, amounted to as much as if he had called
 "Mr. Wesley a juggler. When I was at Mr. Todd's
 "one day dining, I asked him some questions concerning
 "those matters, and he answered me much in the same
 "way." When Mills had proceeded thus far, Mr. Smith
 stopped him, by observing, what a vile man must this
 man be, who makes remarks on what he sees and hears
 in the houses of his friends, and to go to their houses
 for that purpose! And also to make a matter of public
 concern, what passes in private conversations. Then
 turning to P. Mills, he said, but do not you say in your
 letter to Mr. Wesley, that Mr. Coates said those things
 from the pulpit? Mills replied, Dr. Watson might say
 what he pleased in his letter, I do not know what he
 wrote. Mills having shifted the matter from himself to
 Dr. Watson, the Dr. was asked, why he wrote the letter
 alluded to, and how he came by the knowledge of those
 charges it contained? He answered, that he wrote the
 letter by Mr. Mills' desire, and Mills set his own name
 to it, and got Joseph Fothergale and Ralph Watts to
 sign it as witnesses of the truth of its contents. The
 Dr. then laying the thumb of his right hand, upon the
 wrist of his left hand, said, "And I solemnly declare,
 "and will seal it with my blood, that every syllable I
 "wrote, was by Mr. Mills' desire, and I further declare,
 "that I never heard of those charges from any other
 "than Mr. Mills!!" Watts and Fothergale both declared
 the same, and thereby confirmed what Dr. Watson had
 said.

Mr. Wright now grew very noisy again, and often
 called out aloud. "You have no business with Mr.
 Mills, he is not accountable to any of you, come let
 us away, we have no business here, &c. E. Coates
 asked Mr. Wright, what he thought of *Mr. Wesley's*

agent? He answered he is a foolish lad,—If I had been in his place I would not have done as he has done, I would not have lost this fine house, but have had it secured at all events.

Mr. Wright and his friends having so much confused the meeting, that no business could be conducted with any degree of proper decorum, the meeting broke up in disorder and tumult, the preachers departed, and, to our great joy and comfort, never more returned.

EDWARD COATES.

FINIS.

